DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 206 755 UD 021 573

AUTHOR Pickens, Kenneth R.; And Others
TITLE The Urban Education Network: Documentation and Commentary on Its Development.
INSTITUTION CEMREL, Inc., St. Louis, Mo.
SPONS AGENCY National Inst. of Education (ED), Washington, D.C. Dissemination and Improvement of Practice Program.
PUB DATE Nov 80
CONTRACT 400-80-0102
NOTE 117p.; Document published by the Urban Education Program, CEMREL, Inc. Project P-2.

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC05 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Cooperative Planning; *Cooperative Programs; *Educational Improvement; Elementary Secondary Education; *Formative Evaluation; *Information Networks; Program Evaluation; *Urban Education
IDENTIFIERS *Urban Education Network

ABSTRACT

This report presents descriptive and evaluative materials on the development of the Urban Education Network, an organization that joined 20 school districts, 11 state departments of education, and the Central Midwestern Regional Educational Lab (CEMREL), for the purpose of improving urban education. Part I of the report written by Kenneth Pickens and Donald Miller of CEMREL, is a summary of the documentation and formative analysis of the Network which included interviews with Network participants, teachers, and administrators who have benefited from Network programs. This formative analysis is followed in Part II by a commentary on the Network's first three years by Allen Parker, Executive Director of the Center on Technology and Society, and Principal Investigator of a National Institute of Education project which compares over fifty education networks. Part II reviews key issues involved in educational networking and provides an assessment of the Urban Education Network's activities. Appendices to the report elaborate upon the methodology of the formative analysis, give a chronology of the Network's activities, and list its members. (Author/APM)

**********
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
**********

MAY 2 8 1981

ED206755

# THE URBAN EDUCATION NETWORK:

# DOCUMENTATION AND COMMENTARY ON ITS DEVELOPMENT

by

Kenneth R. Pickens and Donald M. Miller
CEMREL, An Educational Laboratory

and

L. Allen Parker
Center on Technology and Society

Urban Education Program
CEMREL, Inc.
3120 59th Street
St. Louis, Missouri 63139
Telephone: 314-781-2900

The work contained herein has been developed pursuant to Contract No. NIE 400-80-0102 Project No. P-2 with the Dissemination and Improvement of Practice Program of the National Institute of Education, U.S. Department of Education. The opinions expressed in this document do not necessarily reflect the position of the National Institute of Education, and no official endorsement by the Institute should be inferred.

UD021 573

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)
☑ This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.
☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.
• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official NIE position or policy.

November 1980

CEMREL, Inc.
An Educational Laboratory

THE URBAN EDUCATION NETWORK:
Documentation and Commentary On Its Development

ERRATA

Page 46, Line 10, Word 6 should be "a" not "the."

Page 51, the following lines should be added after the last line on the page, "their systems that have appeared to result from the ideas and materials gained from the Network. The most active Fellow estimates that more than 15% of the principals and teachers in"

Page 58, Line 10, Word 2 should be "most" not "more."

Page 65, Line 18, Word 4 should be "of" not "in."

Page 74, Line 10, at the beginning of the line, the phrase should be, "have not directed."

Page 80, Line 17, the last word should be "central."

Page 83, Line 10, Word 7 should be "it" not "if" and Line 17, the first word should be "throughout."

Page 84, Line 5, at the end should be "Teachers' Centers Exchange."

Page 102, Line 27, Word 3 should be omitted.

3120 59th Street
St. Louis, Missouri 63139
Tel: (314) 781 2900

THE URBAN EDUCATION NETWORK:

DOCUMENTATION AND COMMENTARY ON ITS DEVELOPMENT

Contents


Preface by John H. Grate and Harriet Doss Willis---------- i

I. Documentation and Formative Analysis of the Urban Education Network- 1
by Kenneth R. Pickens and Donald M. Miller

Introduction---------- 2

Context and Initiation of Network---------- 3

Current and Projected State of the Urban Education Network----- 12

Regional Joint Planning Group---------- 12
Contacts Between Districts or Agencies and Regional Lab---- 18
Contacts Among Fellows, Districts, Agencies---------- 23
Level of Participation Within District or Agency---------- 29
Overall Benefits, Costs, and Value of Network---------- 34

Summary of Findings---------- 36

Attainment of Goals set in 1978---------- 37
Strengths and Growth Points---------- 39
Weaknesses and Potential Problems---------- 42

II. The First Three Years of the Urban Education Network: A Commentary 45
by L. Allen Parker

Executive Summary---------- 46

Introduction---------- 53

Networking and Big City School Districts---------- 55

Development of the Urban Education Network---------- 60

Key Ingredients of the Urban Education Network---------- 67

Commitment to Networking---------- 67
Sense of Shared Purpose---------- 70
Information Sharing and Moral Support---------- 71
Effective Facilitation---------- 72
Voluntary Participation and Equal Treatment---------- 75

Impact of the Urban Education Network---------- 77

Importance of the Next Two Years---------- 82

III. Appendices---------- 86

A. Methodology for the Formative Analysis---------- 87
B. Survey Questionnaire for the Formative Analysis-------- 91
C. Interview Questions for the Formative Analysis--------- 95
D. Chronology of the Urban Education Network Activities-- 101
E. List of Network Members---------- 106

## PREFACE

The Urban Education Network was developed on the premise that large city school districts share a number of common problems amenable to solution. Further, we believed that through the joint efforts of the participating institutions and the facilitation provided by CEMREL, we could increase our knowledge and skills in working toward the goal of school improvement. As we began to develop strategies for working together, the consultants who provided assistance with the network's development indicated that we were involved in an unique endeavor. The uniqueness is based on the fact that there are 20 large school districts, 11 state departments of education, and a regional educational laboratory attempting to address mutual problems, to use research and development-based solutions, and to engage in joint work across and between institutions. In the view of observers of prior attempts to develop similar working relationships, we were embarking on a highly complex and unique enterprise.

From the start a major concern of network participants was that the effort be grounded in sound theory and that we maintain a data-based orientation to our work. The formative analysis and documentation of the Urban Education Network is intended to provide a baseline by which to judge the progress of our efforts, to determine what kinds of collaboration are occurring, what corrective measures need to be taken as

the effort matures, and which of the strategies that are being employed are successful. The Network was not launched without some reservation on the part of all participants including CEMREL and the National Institute of Education. The questions of the degree to which a networking strategy can facilitate the application of research and development outcomes to urban school improvement efforts is still unanswered. Therefore, we anticipate that the continuous effort to analyze the plans, activities, and outcomes of our work will not only be informative for the Network's participants, but will serve as an important tool for other educators.

The improvement of instruction and learning in urban settings is not an easy or short term task. The magnitude of the task underlies our concern to look carefully at the following: the way the Network's goals and objectives are set and implemented; under what conditions participating institutions can launch joint programmatic efforts; which individuals in school systems need to be involved at various stages in Network activities and programs; and how to measure the Network's effects on the efforts of its participants to improve urban education. It is essential that we develop the expertise to analyze both the formal and informal interactions in the Network, the perceptions of those involved, and how to increase the impact of Network activities and programs on classrooms, teachers, and students.

Given that the Network is comprised of participating institutions and that their representatives will change over time, this study also provides a means to communicate its history and development. Several of our expectations in this regard have been realized. Earlier releases of the study have highlighted areas in which the Network could make important changes, for example: techniques for communicating on-going needs and activities; organizational and decision-making procedures; the selection of specific content on which to focus; and the name and ownership of the Network. These issues have been re-examined by the representatives of the districts and state departments of education, called Urban Fellows, and actions have been taken on the basis of the information provided. We anticipate that our on-going activities will benefit by this kind of information and its examination and use.

This report begins with a summary of the documentation and formative analysis of the Network carried out by Kenneth Pickens and Donald Miller during February thru November 1980. Guided by Miller, who directs CEMREL's School Learning and Policies Group, Pickens carried out extensive interviews of CEMREL staff and the Network's Urban Fellows. He also visited several districts to interview some of the teachers and administrators who have benefited from programs facilitated by the Network. The formative analysis is followed by a commentary on the Network's first three years written by Allen Parker, one of the nation's

leading experts on the networking strategy for school improvement. Parker, who is Executive Director of the Center on Technology and Society in Cambridge, Massachusetts, and Principal Investigator of a NIE project portraying and comparing over fifty networks for improving education, helped plan the documentation and formative analysis and interviewed some of the staff and Urban Fellows. Appendices to the report elaborate upon the methodology of the formative analyses, give a chronology of the Network's activities, and lists its members.

Future analysis and documentation of the Network will continue to serve as a means to measure our progress. It also will serve to identify needs for modification and clarification of goals, objectives and tasks. It will help guide the improvement of the conduct of our joint work.

We wish to extend our thanks and appreciation to Donald Miller, Allen Parker, and Kenneth Pickens. The manner in which the study was conducted and their sensitivity to staff, the Urban Fellows and our tight time schedules have been commendable.

John H. Grate,
Advisory Committee Chairperson &
Urban Fellow from Cincinnati

Harriet Doss Willis, Director
CEMREL Urban Education Program

I.

# DOCUMENTATION AND FORMATIVE ANALYSIS OR THE URBAN EDUCATION NETWORK

## Overview of Study Findings

by Kenneth R. Pickens and Donald Miller

# INTRODUCTION

In the summer of 1977, CEMREL, Inc., received a grant from the National Institute of Education to plan and implement an Urban Education Conference. In order to develop that program, a planning group made up of national consultants and state and urban educators in the region was convened. Out of this original planning group has grown an Urban Education Network representing the twenty largest school districts and eleven state education departments in the Midwest.

This formative analysis is an overview of the current state of development of that Network and its prospects for the future. It does not propose to be an exhaustive description of all the events that have occurred within the first three years of the Network's existence nor does it provide a stipulative list of recommendations to shape the Network's future. Rather it is an attempt to give an overall representation of the Urban Education Network based on extensive documentation of the perceptions, assessments, and expectations of the participants and their represented districts and agencies. From this self-analysis, the participants may better take stock of the Network and more effectively plan its continuing development.

The description of the Urban Education Network that follows is presented in three major sections - (1) Context and Initiation, (2) Current and Projected State, and (3) Summary of Findings. These sections will show

how the original goals of the Network developed, the extent to which they have been altered or met, and some trends which may indicate strengths or weaknesses for the Network's future. Appendices provide additional and more concrete information about (1) the methodology for the study, (2) the chronology of Network activities, and (3) a complete list of Network members and represented districts or agencies.

## Context and Initiation of Network

Though an entire case history of Urban Education Network is not necessary for the purposes of this overview, a brief description of its origins and contextual background is important insofar as it affects and illuminates current network activities and expectations.

During the spring of 1977 discussions were occurring at CEMREL and NIE about ways of becoming more responsive to the problems of big-city school districts. At the same time the Educational Policy and Organization Program in NIE was looking for means of assembling what was known about the state of instruction in urban education. These interests came together so that in the summer of 1977 CEMREL was offered a sole-source grant opportunity to convene a 1978 conference on research in urban education instruction.*

*Which would come to be titled: What Do We Know About Teaching and Learning in Urban Schools?

Harriet Doss Willis was made project director for organizing that conference. She, along with Wade Robinson and Donald Miller felt that the conference needed an audience of urban school people to be truly effective. In order to develop that audience and improve CEMREL's relationship with city districts and state education departments, it was decided to form an Urban Educaton Program (UEP) which would actively involve both state and city systems. So that such a program would be developed with input from those it hoped to reach, advisors were sought from the 12 state education departments and twenty largest school districts within or adjacent to the CEMREL region.

The initial letter which went out to urban and state superintendents of schools, invited them or their representatives to attend a Regional Joint Planning Group (RJPG) in St. Louis October 25-27, 1977, for the purposes of assisting in developing the Urban Education Program. It suggested that if the superintendent or commissioner could not attend, he might send representatives "who have responsibility for curriculum planning and implementation and/or research and evaluation." These representatives later came to be called "Urban Fellows." The original goals of this group were indicated in the letter:

1. To acquaint districts and agencies within the region with current work and future plans of CEMREL programs.
2. To develop procedures for on-going, cooperative planning of the work of the Urban Education Program.

3. To identify current successful exemplary programs and practices being conducted by large urban school systems in the 12 state region and lay the groundwork for a "status study" of these efforts.

and 4. To identify those urban school districts wishing to initiate cooperative projects with the Urban Education Program in the immediate future and make plans for following up to develop such projects.

In short, it was expected that ways might be found to both collect examples of successful urban education and use the resources of a regional educational laboratory to more effectively address the educational problems which confronted urban school systems.

When this letter was received, the Fellows got involved by a process whereby the superintendent or commissioner passed the invitation down the educational hierarchy until it reached an interested administrator or one who felt he or she should accept the position. In at least two cases (occurring later), however, administrators heard of the RJPG and pressed from within their organizations to be designated as official representatives.

In all, 31 organizations have responded from a twelve-state region including nineteen of the twenty urban districts with 50,000 or more pupils and all eleven of the state education agencies. Ten of the districts and four of the agencies sent representatives to the first RJPG meeting; the other systems designated representatives during the next two years. Only five systems have changed their representatives during the network's history. (In one case, the change was necessit[illegible] because the

Fellow became Acting Superintendent of her system. Appendix E lists the Urban Fellows and their positions in their systems.)

The selection process has resulted in a group made up of representatives from the deputy or assistant superintendent/commissioner level, through directors or coordinators, to an assistant principal. All but one of the Fellows from the urban school system represent the central office, as opposed to school building, level. All of the state education agency representatives come from central offices. The largest representation comes from directors as indicated in the list below.

| | |
|---|---|
| Directors | 11 |
| Assistant Superintendents | 4 |
| Supervisors | 4 |
| Deputy Superintendents | 2 |
| Specialists | 2 |
| Consultants | 2 |
| Associate Superintendent | 1 |
| Deputy Commissioner | 1 |
| Assistant Commissioner | 1 |
| Coordinator | 1 |
| Assistant Director | 1 |
| Assistant Principal | 1 |
| Staff Assistant | 1 |
| Total | 32 |

When these delegates first attended a RJPG meeting they felt some unease and suspicion but they also came with certain expectations and goals. Their questionnaire and interview responses to the study reported here reveal that although the first two of their reasons for involvement

generally match goals 1 and 3 of the Urban Education Program's initial letter, the representatives entered the RJPG with additional purposes in mind.

Their expectations fall into four major areas of concern:

1. Access to successful urban programs in other systems (11 Responses)

2. Association and collaboration with peers from urban districts (10 responses)

3. Access to urban education research (results, methods, personnel) (10 responses)

4. Access to CEMREL (program, personnel, technical assistance, research information) (8 responses)

Four additional areas of concern also were voiced:

5. Political unity and strength (3 responses)

6. Direction for state departments developing policies affecting urban schools (3 responses)

7. Funding support, proposal assistance (2 responses)

8. Awareness of NIE urban school initiatives (1 response)

Such expectations are significant in that they ultimately contributed to a redefining of the purposes of the RJPG and the Urban Education Network and still, to some extent, shape the participants' hopes for the future. Item #2 is particularly notable because it was to become an important function of the Network. Prior to these meetings, members report that for the most part little or no contact was taking place between the component systems. Some contacts did exist informally through other organizations (NABSE, Council of Great Cities, etc.), but even these were primarily concentrated at the superintendent or top administrative level rather than the director level heavily represented in the Network.

When the delegates with these underlying purposes first met CEMREL's Urban Education staff to work on the stated goals of the invitations, the expectations for the organization began to change and grow. After the 1977 meeting of the RJPG, it became apparent that the potential existed for more than just an advisory board to the Urban Education Program. The potential was there to create a network of representatives from the districts and agencies who would share materials, ideas and moral support with each other as well as advise the UEP. The UEP staff first learned

about the networking strategy from a CEMREL staff member whom a NIE official had placed in contact with a researcher documenting the development of several different networks for improving education.

Since the RJPG was too large and too costly to convene frequently, the UEP staff organized an ad hoc committee of six members including the RJPG representatives who had expressed the most interest in assisting the UEP in preparing for the urban education conference. The first ad hoc committee meeting, in February of 1978, discussed not only the preparations for the conference, but also the RJPG becoming a network. This discussion continued at a second meeting of the RJPG in April 1978. In May 1978, the UEP staff brought in the networking researcher that NIE had earlier suggested, and he dialogued with the staff about their emerging plans for an urban education network. Development of the plans continued until, by the March 1979 meeting of the RJPG, "Urban Education Network" was a term used by both the UEP staff and some of the RJPG representatives. At this same meeting, the ad hoc committee was formally named the "Advisory Committee." However, although the word "network" became standard jargon, the UEP staff and RJPG representatives continued to use the acronym RJPG as well.

Another important development took place during the first half of 1978. When the representatives were released by their systmes to come to the first RJPG meeting, it was not clear that they would be expected to make

periodic subsequent trips to meetings and that they might become part of a permanent network of 31 large systems in twelve states. As the planning for a permanent network unfolded, the representatives said that they needed to be given a formal status in both the UEP and their systems in order to formally legitimize their continuing participation. The first ad hoc committee meeting therefore created the concept of "Urban Fellow," which was approved at the second RJPG meeting. After obtaining approval of his or her system to participate in a permanent urban education network, each representative would receive an "Urban Fellow" certificate from CEMREL. It took four months after the second RJPG meeting for all of the original representatives to obtain the approval of their systems to become Urban Fellows. Subsequently, all new representatives have obtained such approval before their entry into the RJPG.

By May of 1978, it was possible to list new goals for the RJPG that had incorporated some of the Urban Fellows' expectations. A new list of goals was prepared at that time for presentation at the annual convention of the American Educational Research Association:

1. To develop the ability of a small Urban Education staff to interact with 20 city school systems and 12 state departments of education fairly and effectively.
2. To provide an opportunity for development of collegial relationships among urban educators in the CEMREL region.
3. To accomplish the compilation and dissemination of up to date research-based information about urban education to urban educators.

4. To maintain and service the Network.

5. To help Network partners to utilize r&d.

6. To match school district needs with CEMREL or other Network member's capabilities.

7. To develop collaborative r&d efforts among school districts, state departments and CEMREL in order to improve school practice.

In comparing these with the original goals, it is clear that a new emphasis on member contact and collaboration and on networking had been introduced. In comparing them with expectations of the members, it is equally clear that some of the individuals' goals still had not been assimilated by the group (i.e., political unity and strength; funding support; awareness of NIE initiatives; and direction for state education departments). However, the overall direction for the first three years had been set.

Since this original formation process, continued funding from NIE (grants for 18, 3, 3, and 30 months consecutively) is making possible a total of eleven RJPG meetings during 1977-1982. Seven meetings have been held and four are planned. During 1979 the Network's development was slowed and the RJPG met only once because of inadequate funds for a second

meeting. After the UEP funding was transferred to NIE's Dissemination and Improvement of Practice Division in June 1980, the 30 month grant was approved and the Network could continue its development.

Sharing of programs, projects, information, and technical assistance have begun to take place and various other activities and types of involvement have expanded and altered the concept of the RJPG. What the Network now is like after those first three years and what it is projected to become in the future are the subjects of the rest of this report.

## Current and Projected State of the Urban Education Network

### Regional Joint Planning Group

Almost immediately after the first year of meetings of the RJPG, the decision making and governance structure began to be altered. When they started, most members saw the meetings as dominated by the Urban Education staff of CEMREL. Since meetings were held in St. Louis and included exhibits of CEMREL's other projects, some members viewed them as "product fairs" for the Laboratory. Now, however, the overall perception is that the Advisory Committee, the RJPG meeting format, and the emergence of leaders from among the Urban Fellows have resulted in a truly cooperative governing system in which any member can participate in decision making.

Along with this change is an attendant change in the feeling of ownership. Among currently low-involved districts or agencies, there is still some perception that it is CEMREL's network and not their own, but most members express a growing sense of partnership that has also contributed to the relevance of the group's discussions and activities. As one Fellow put it, "It's becoming more an urban education network than a CEMREL network." Another added, "When I first started, some agendas had been prepared without input. I thought we were going around in circles and getting nothing usable. Because of the involvement of the members we're now moving into pratical answers and information. We're providing a lot more input than we used to."

A significant contributor to this feeling has been the growth of the Advisory Committee. Meetings of this committee precede every session of the full RJPG. Here, nine representatives made up of the original Ad Hoc Committee and others added to insure broad regional representation set the RJPG meeting agenda and decide how to deal with longer term policy matters. The realization that the Committee has real decision making power has contributed strongly to feelings of ownership and self-direction among the representatives.

Another factor in this perception has been the emergence of leadership from within the RJPG membership. One member especially has given much effort into seeing that the RJPG meetings run smoothly, address the needs

and expectations of the Fellows, and move toward action and resolution. Others also have begun to arise out of the membership to guide the Network toward school or state system priorities, both during the RJPG sessions and outside them through the fostering of external contacts and meetings.

Another reason for the shared governing and decision making is the preceived role of the UEP staff. Although there was some expectation for them to provide more leadership and direct technical assistance, most Fellows now see the staff to have played an appropriate and competent role as initiator, facilitator, resource gatherer and occasional consultant.

Whether because of the opportunity provided for self determination or for a combination of benefits and other reasons, the RJPG meetings have drawn a steady and continuous representation. Attendance figures for the first seven full sessions are as follows:

| Date | Urban representatives | State representatives | Total attendance |
|---|---|---|---|
| October 1977 | 10 | 4 | 14 |
| April 1978 | 8 | 4 | 12 |
| July 1978 | 13 | 6 | 19 |
| December 1978 | 12 | 6 | 18 |
| March 1979 | 16 | 7 | 23 |
| April 1980 | 15 | 5 | 20 |
| October 1980 | 16 | 7 | 23 |

This comparatively stable participation can be attributed in part to the coordinating efforts of the UEP personnel.

Fellows consistently expressed an appreciation for the warmth, enthusiasm, and dedication of the staff. Not only did most fellows contacted ask that their regards be sent to various members of the UEP, but they made many favorable comments exemplified by the following:

> "I always get answers when I ask. The lab provides resources and a competent staff. We would wander without their human resources."
>
> "The staff has given of time and expertise far beyond expectations for education agencies."
>
> "Nellie (Harrison) and Harriet (Willis) have provided excellent leadership. They listen to the Fellows so that those things planned reflect the wishes of the Urban Fellows. They keep things focused."
>
> "The friendliness and congeniality of CEMREL personnel should be pointed out."

The meetings the staff has convened also are generally approved in terms of format, frequency, and time allotted.

- Problems and disappointments

Despite the overall positive tone of participants' assessments of the RJPG, however, there are some problems and disappointments. The feeling of ownership for the group is not as widespread among its members as some would like. A contributing factor is that the identity of the organization seems to have been confused by its title. As may already be apparent from the wording of this report, there is a marked inconsistency in what members call their group. During our interviews it was referred to variously as UEP, RJPG (or even RGPJ), UEP Network, CEMREL, CEMREL's

Network, and Harriet's Network. This not only muddies the identity and expectations of the Urban Fellows, but it makes it more difficult for them to explain to others in their districts or agencies what they are about at these meetings. Also there is a lingering notion that the NIE or CEMREL still may have some hidden agendas for the group. This has been lessened over time, but does still exist.

Another concern with with NIE arises because of the inadequacy of the funding which eliminated the fall 1979 meeting of the RJPG. Many participants mentioned this as a problem since it raised doubts about the regularity of meetings and the stability for the Network. The source of the problem, however, is seen to be in Washington rather than with the UEP staff. In expressing this, one representative said, "The regional labs are trying to be more responsive to school systems than NIE allows them to be."

For many, the meetings themselves are now too concerned with planning and not enough with concrete results. Further, if collaborative research or projects are desired outcomes, some doubt that two meetings a year will be sufficient.

Another of concern is an uncertainty about how future vacancies or desire for inclusion on the Advisory Committee will be handled. No provisions for that contingency have yet been made.

- Future expectations, suggestions

In looking at the views of the members it is clear that although there is general approval of current RJPG decision-making processes, support staff, and meetings, there exist expectations for change and growth in the next few years. One suggestion given for assuring continued ownership and partnership in the RJPG was that more tangible outcomes be pursued at meetings. The common perception is that a foundation of stability and planning has been laid, and that now the time has come for concrete results, visible within school systems. Strategies suggested to stimulate such outcomes were more small group sessions working on topics of special interest, more direct technical assistance to member sites, and more meetings in other represented cities.

In order to provide additional opportunities for organizing collaborative programs and research, it was suggested that the semi-annual full RJPG meetings be supplemented by state or sub-regional conferences. Such conferences might be primarily funded by participants (since travel expenses would not be high) with the UEP staff acting mainly as initiators and facilitators. One Fellow brought up the possibility of writing a foundation proposal to get seed money for joint collaboration meetings if local funding were not forthcoming. It was further suggested that involvement in regional conferences could be increased by including not only Urban Fellows, but also members of their support teams and representatives of nearby "medium sized" city systems.

With such additions and improvements most active members would continue to be satisfied with the RJPG meetings and might be able to persuade other Fellows to become more directly involved.

Already, in fact, two cities which have not regularly attended RJPG meetings have indicated a desire to begin doing so. In response to the questionnaire, one stated that because two on-going programs in the system are similar to objectives of the Urban Education program, "It was decided...that active participation would be advantageous to us at this time. We feel we have something to offer for the Network system, and in turn we hope we can reap some ideas for our current projects." Indications such as these point to the possibility of growth in the Regional Joint Planning Group. Past attendance figures imply, at least, continuity.

Contact Between Districts or Agency and Regional Laboratory

- Current Status

One of the most often mentioned goals of both the UEP and the Urban Fellows was theimprovement of the relationships between urban schools or state departments and their regional educational laboratory. Though CEMREL assistance and programs had been going on in several of the cities before their involvement in the Network, it was hoped that one outcome of its formation would be the development of better institutional linkage

and, with it, a more effective delivery of research, materials, information, and technical assistance to urban school systems.

In this regard, activity has been significant in a few participating districts or agencies but not widespread. Three cities identify themselves as being highly invlolved in CEMREL initiated programs or receiving a considerable amount of technical assistance. Two of these had strong on-going relationships with the laboratory before the inception of the UEP (though the extent of those relationships increased after their memberships in the Network). Six districts reported no such activity, with the rest naming one to three instances of either programmatic or technical assistance.

The kinds of assistance mentioned include:

- inservice meetings and workshops conducted by CEMREL staff or outside consultants
- the Oral and Written Communication Project
- the Women and Minorities Program
- the Aesthetic Education Project
- and, begining next year in one city, a project for secondary school improvement

Access to information has been improved in all the member sites. Everyone reported an increased amount of materials, documents, and information being received at numerous intervals throughout the year. This increased access to information was the most frequently listed benefit to being involved in the network, with 18 of the Fellows

reporting it helpful (the one communication most often mentioned as useful was Research Within Reach). A few members found the flow of information to be overwhelming at times, but there was agreement that it was better to let the Fellows sort out what was especially appropriate for their district or agency rather than have more prior selection done by the UEP staff.

In addition to this increase in unsolicited materials, there were also four representatives who reported making many requests of the laboratory for information needed by their systems in order to write proposals, plan programs, and make decisions. One of these members went so far as to say, "I have contacted CEMREL on everything I've had to deal with." Five representatives, however, could recall no occasion on which they had sought assistance or information from CEMREL or the UEP staff.

Along with communications delivered by phone or mail, some valuable information was also supplied at the two major conferences (What Do We Know About Teaching and Learning in Urban Schools, and From Desegregated Schools to Integrated Education). Eleven Fellows specifically identified information obtained at these conferences as one of the major benefits from their participation in the Network. Further, the conferences have allowed members to meet consultants such as Isabel Beck and Ron Edmonds who have since worked on several occasions with three of the participating institutions.

Overall it is the growth in information services and distribution which is the most immediate product of the Urban Education Network. A representative from one of the state education agencies found, "The information I've gotten has been fantastic - exactly the things I'm interested in." An administrator from an urban district supported that by saying, "I've become aware of research and gotten a knowledge base and papers to come back and move my staff. It has contributed to the quality of the decisions I've had to make."

- Problems, disappointments

Still, if Fellows are generally satisfied with the amount and quality of information to which they now have access, and see a strengthening in the relationship with their regional laboratory, they also report needs for improvement in the future. One notable area of difficulty lies with those districts or agencies whose official representatives do not actively attend meetings or distribute information throughout their systems. In at least two of these instances CEMREL assistance has been received, but by a process which circumvents the established representational structure. Though such a process accomplishes short term goals, it also perpetuates an inherent weakness-i.e. cooperation between lab and district or agency becomes only as strong as the individual program, item of information, or person(s) involved. There exists a desire in such sites to somehow increase the participation of the representative so that a better foundation for institutional contact and collaboration can be established.

Other suggestions and expectations for the future in this area include:

- more direct involvement and assistance to local schools within a district.
- more consultation and services to those cities not now receiving them.
- the development of more programs and research that assist districts with their problems.

One instance which suggests how several of these might be met is already functioning in a city which, due to its size, does not officially belong to the Urban Education Network. In this case the school system contacted Harriet Willis seeking assistance in the assessment and improvement of its reading program. Despite the fact that they were too small (under 50,000 pupils) to qualify for acceptance into the Urban Education Program, Willis was able through cooperation with the Regional Exchange (another program within the School Improvement Group of CEMREL) to provide the system with enthusiastically received personal consultation, appropriate information, outside consultants, and other technical assistance.

The investment not only produced significant effects throughout this particular school system (including benefits to building adminstrators and every classroom teacher K-6), it also gave benefits to the Urban Education Network. Such an intervention, since it took place in an urban setting, provides a model for similarly successful interventions to follow in the larger cities. Secondly, since this district was not a member of the Urban Education Network, it acts as an example of how the benefits received through the Network might be proliferated in non-member

sites throughout the 12 state region. Though this one instance is not the answer to all the concerns listed above, it does point to one capacity for their resolution.

Contacts Among Fellows, Districts, Agencies

- Current Status

Contact with peers at other urban school districts and state agencies was listed both as an important goal and as a benefit already received from participation in the Network. The largest measure of it, however, has been occurring at the RJPG meetings themselves, rather than during the rest of the year.

Six participants specifically found the chance to interact with colleagues both formally and informally during the meetings to be a major benefit from their memberships, though they saw it as more personally or professionally beneficial than as a direct contribution to their district or agency.

Outside the limitations of the RJPG meeting dates, contact between members, though increasing, is sporadic at this time. Of the 31 represented districts or agencies, 10 report no contact (outside of meetings) during the past three years, 17 report five or fewer contacts, while 4 listed fifteen or more occasions on which they have called, written, or visited another Urban Fellow or district as a result of their being in the Urban Education Network.

One member is, at this time, using the Network extensively for gathering information. This Fellow, despite obstacles to sharing materials in his own district (or perhaps because of them), has turned to participants in other districts or agencies at least 68 different times in order to get information for the development of projects and to get assistance on policy concerns within his organization. (The second most active fellow in this regard reports making 21 contacts, while the third and fourth report 19 and 15 respectively.) He has found the contacts worthwhile in that, "They have saved me many hours of duplicative research," but expresses disappointment in the few (10) times others have contacted him.

The most contacted of the districts or agencies was gotten in touch with on 18 different occasions, but strong reciprocal relationships between member institutions are few. A beginning of such a relationship seems to be forming between one pair of cities, with a lesser indication of reciprocity between two other pairs. Three cities and their state education agencies report ongoing relationships, but not as a result of the Network. It is, however, worth noting that three urban representatives indicated that the RJPG meetings were the first contact they had had with anyone from their state education agency.

So far, the results of the contacts between members have been primarily informational, e.g. materials on programs, research results, methods, or evaluation devices. However, at least five intra-district visits have also been organized, including an indivudual school field trip and principals from one city visiting schools in another.

One other instance of visitation is noteworthy because it involved the cooperation of different members of the Network. The Urban Fellow from one state education agency contacted the Urban Fellow from a city within his state to report the availability of funds to visit exemplary programs, the city representative contacted the UEP staff which in turn put him in touch with an urban representative from another state. As a result of this network of contacts, staff from a city school district in one state were enabled to observe, first-hand, exemplary programs in a city in another state. Though this is to our knowledge the only instance of such a many faceted use of the Network, it does at least point out a capability for the future.

- Problems, disappointments

Inter-member contact has been seen by some to be a disappointment in the Network's functioning. It is perceived that not enough sharing and collaboration has yet taken place, that some cities either do not attempt to use the network or are not responsive to requests from others, and that urban/state unity has not developed enough in some states. Obstacles

accounting for these problems have also been described:

1. Some cities feel they have little in common.
2. There is not enough knowledge of what other systems have to share.
3. There are some political issues blocking contacts. Some reluctance exists to share successful ideas with those who may also be competitors for grants and recognition. Also, as one administrator candidly put it, "There is the political question inherent in asking someone else's advice - 'Why couldn't we do it ourselves?' - "It begins with the assumption that what's here is crappy."
4. Urban/state cooperation has a long histroy of inefficacy for a variety of reasons.

- Future expectations, suggestions

Fellows do, however, provide suggestions and expectations for overcoming these obstacles and difficulties. In order to address the problem caused by the diversity in states and cities, members have proposed the following:

- "Special interest groups could focus on problems of common interest." This concept began in December 1978. There were five special interest groups identified at the time. Fellows were asked to sign up to work on these topics. Of the five topics, one developed into a national conference, From Desegregation to Integration (1979); the second was so new in education, Competency Based Education, that the interest group decided to set it aside for the time being and the remaining three still exist. They are Career Exploration, Oral and Written Communication, and Effective Strategies for Classroom Management. In April 1980, five additional interest groups were added. They are School Climate Improvement, Problems of High School Youth, Basic Skills Improvement, Cutback Management, and Strengthening the Principalship. It seems reasonable to expect those members with similar interests to be getting together more readily in the near future. In fact one member has, on his own, been setting up a meeting of those interested in School Climate to take place outside the scheduled RJPG meeting.

- "Have meetings for job-alike representatives" and "A subnetwork of researchers could do collaborative research." In these cases, it is felt that those Fellows with similar functions could get together either at the RJPG meetings or at other conferences. This tactic, hopefully, would counteract the problems that attend disparity of representation in the Network.

The second obstacle to cooperation, the lack of knowledge of what other systems have, also has potential for solution in current activities. One Fellow said, "A master list of things going on in other districts would be great." A few days after making this comment (though not as a result of it) the Fellow received a copy of the updated Status Study of Exemplary School Programs. This study presents an expanded list and descriptions of submitted exemplary programs. The possibility of even greater sharing was also found during the interviews for this report. Every administrator identified substantial other untapped resources that would be useful to others and that they would be willing to share in the future - particularly if less rigorous standards of success would be sufficient (i.e. the judgment of the Fellows and their educational staffs as opposed to complete evaluations and hard data). There exists a sense of pride in each of the districts or agencies, and this pride could be translated into an increased sharing of successful activities in the future. One Fellow mentioned that the ideal would be, "an <u>automatic</u> sharing of information without having to request it."

This tendency to share could, however, be blocked by the political obstacles mentioned in the third item at the top of page 26. Perhaps such issues may never be completely overcome, but the increased trust brought about by continued relationships may hold the hope of minimizing the competitive and political difficulties that can prevent inter-district/agency cooperation. In order to build this trust, some Fellows have

suggested that it is critical that regular attendance by the same representatives be encouraged. It was suggested that representation might be enhanced if the Fellows themselves participated in asking those less active members to attend.

The ongoing participation of those already active Fellows was felt to depend on their ability to point to tangible outcomes in the future. If programs could be pointed to as a result of their participation in the Network, their continuing attendance would be easily justified to their own districts and agencies, and less involved Fellows could be persuaded to attend more frequently.

The fourth obstacle identified - the history of poor relationships between state departments and urban schools - seems to be altering somewhat as a result of larger forces. Whatever the traditional gap has been between these two entities, everyone interviewed saw it as in the process of narrowing. Increasing urban problems, state and federal funding, a growing interest among state education agencies to assist city schools, and desegregation are a few of the issues at work to make cooperation between state education agencies and urban school systems possible or perhaps necessary. Most cities find themselves getting in touch more often with their state offices while state education departments report the beginning or the improvement of their capacity to work with urban systems. If this trend continues, the Urban Network might well provide one forum for that relationship to be developed.

Level of Participation Within District or Agency

- Current status

Inside their own districts or agencies Urban Fellows act to greater or lesser degrees in three different roles. They are 1) disseminators of information, 2) contacts between their systems and the Urban Education Program (or CEMREL), and 3) contacts with other districts or agencies. In two cases they are also initiators and/or coordinators of collaborative activities and programs. As of now the Urban Fellow is the key to his or her system's involvement in the Network activities. Except for two cases in which personal contacts of the UEP staff make it possible to carry on programs, provide assistance, and/or distribute information without active participation of the formal representative, the level of school system or state agency involvement is dependent on the degree to which the Urban Fellow is able or willing to pass on information and encourage active participation. In one city, the central role of the Urban Fellow is seen as a bottleneck to extensive involvement of other district personnel who have heard of the Network's activities and want to contact the UEP and other districts directly rather than going through the busy Fellow. However, in view of school system politics and functioning, most people interviewed thought that a formal representative is needed if there is to be a strong link between the district or agency and the Network.

Support teams, named by the Fellows from their organizations, have been formed to help increase the impact of the Fellows' participation. At

this time, however, the support teams are newly created and in almost all situations membership is only titular. A few members were not even aware that they had been named to a support team.

Given this arrangement, participation is, in most systems, a matter of receiving and passing along information. The Urban Fellow gets materials either through the mail or at RJPG meetings and distributes it to what he or she considers the proper office (primarily to the director of a department). The director then may filter relevant information through his or her section of the system.

In four districts the superintendent is kept directly informed of Network information or activities through meetings with the Urban Fellow. In most others, superintendents receive written reports or informational materials from Fellows without direct discussions. In still others (5) the superintendent is seen as uninterested or too busy and so is not kept informed by the representative.

To describe what effects the Urban Education Network has had within the participating districts or agencies, it would be accurate to characterize the influence at its best as broad but not deep. Five of the Fellows report that results of the Network have not reached beyond them personally. All others state that influence has primarily reached across the director level within their systems. No one reports deep significant infusion of benefits into the system, but seven are beginning to see <u>some</u> effects at the school building level. The Urban Fellow from the city with

the broadest level of involvement estimates that Network activities have so far influenced about 15% of his system.

Right now the nature of the Network's influence on districts and agencies is generally limited to knowledge building and awareness. More tangible outcomes are, however, apparent in a few systems. Teachers from 39 schools in two different cities, for example, are piloting a Written and Oral Communication Project developed at CEMREL and offered through the UEP Network. Once refined, this project will be available for use in any other interested districts. One of those cities also is using math and aesthetic education materials from CEMREL in several of its schools. This kind of concrete influence on local schools is in evidence in seven of the member districts.

Less tangible, but perhaps of more far reaching effect are those influences which help shape planning and policy. In one system, for instance, the Urban Fellow attended a workshop, through the Network, about classroom management. What she learned there about classroom observation was transferred to the research and evaluation staff in her school system. Previously, pre-test post-test data had given teachers an indication of student progress but no information had been obtained on <u>why</u> it had occurred. Now, classroom observation has been made a standard step in all evaluations done in this system, and some evidence may be referred to by those looking for clues to increased or decreased performance. The long term effects of this kind of influence on teaching and learning are

difficult to measure, yet it is clear that there will be some influence as a result of this Fellow's participation in the Network.

Other examples of this less tangible kind of effect in a system are:

- In one city an area superintendent's office is now organized on the same structure as CEMREL's.
- In another city ideas discussed at the meetings' and conferences have been used by staff (mostly central office) in areas such as mathematics, reading, staff development, urban education research, planning, and alternative education.
- Another Fellow has used materials gathered through the Network for revision of the system-wide policy manual, a study of competency based instruction, policy papers on system-wide promotion and grading, development of middle and elementary language arts programs, development of a math program, development of comprehensive middle school program, and the conversion of the system to a uniform grade organization plan.
- Concepts of "indicators" and "school improvement" (discussed at the July 10-14, 1978 Research Conference by Eva Baker and Ron Edmonds respectively) were influential in one Fellow's development of a system-wide administrative management system. Now, four times a year, each principal receives a computer printout reporting indicators of school improvement for his/her building.

The ultimate effects of influences such as these may not be known for some time to come. They do point to areas, however, where evidence of school improvement may be sought in future analyses of the Urban Education Network and its effectiveness.

- Problems, disappointments

In general though, the view is that participation in the Urban Network is not yet great enough at the school and classroom level. In five districts or agencies it has not reached, even informationally, beyond the

representative Urban Fellow. In at least two of these cases, the system is undergoing a period of disruptive instability or reorganizaion that prevents the kind of climate necessary for open sharing and cooperation.

Another kind of obstacle has arisen in systems where the degree of system penetration by the Urban Fellow has been, in a sense, too successful. In these cases involvement has become so visible and widespread that there are some within the organization who perceive the Fellow as an impediment to their own direct particiption in UEP facilitated activities. Requests are surfacing to allow either additional representation from these systems or replacement of the current Urban Fellow by another, higher ranked officer in the institutional structure.

- Expectations, suggestions

To help solve these problems, members suggest finding ways to get more direct involvement of others in central office, principals, and classroom teachers. A step toward this goal might be the closer involvement of support team members and a clarification of their roles. One suggestion was that support team members be included at RJPG meetings or regional conferences. With a strong and active support team, Network activities would be more likely to reach the appropriate department and get efficiently down to the building and classroom level. Further, the support team concept makes it possible for Network influence to extend beyond the capacity of the individual Urban Fellow.

Again, members also emphasized the importance of having more tangible products or accomplishments to support further participation from within their districts or agencies.

Overall Benefits, Costs, and Value of Network

Although overall benefits to school systems are not extensive, most members seem satisfied with the level of progress up to this point. As one put it: "I've been satisfied to date, but I'm still looking for the potential for our district. If we're still at this point two years from now, I'd be dissatisfied." Benefits still rest largely in information sharing and personal contacts (at little cost) with several being able to point to specific projects, consultants or technical assistance received as a result of their participation.

According to the Urban Fellows there is a plethora of networks, organizations, and groups to which educational administrators have access. A revealing question thus was, "Why continue to belong to the Urban Education Network when so many other opportunities exist?" Answers indicated not only the participants views of its current strengths, but also their outlook for the Network's future value and potential. According to their responses, the value of this Network over other groups is that:

1. It is founded on a research base that provides supporting data for what it tries to do.

2. It allows members at lower levels of administration (less than superintendent) to have contacts and professional opportunities they might not otherwise have.
3. It has a broad enough scope to keep many districts and agencies involved (as opposed to specific issue organizations).
4. It has considerable stability.
5. It provides consultants, products, and materials (not just communication).
6. It has a great potential for significant contacts and collaboration with other districts and agencies and the development of programs that meet the real needs of urban schools.
7. It is free.

Although travel expenses, meeting costs, and programs offered have not required direct financial contribution from the participating districts and agencies, there are, of course, other kinds of costs for involvement. The most often mentioned is the time and energy of personnel. Not only do Urban Fellows attending RJPG meetings use time which otherwise would be devoted to their own duties, but their involvement also demands time for preparation, sharing of information, and attending to their RJPG business. In some cases this information sharing is seen as mostly one way; that is, more is given than received (though some see presentations of their successful programs as a benefit rather than a cost). Sharing of a district or agency's programmatic, informational, personnel, and time

resources becomes difficult because in most cases the reciprocal benefits to the district or agency are not easily demonstrable.

Despite these drawbacks, most members will not have difficulty continuing for awhile as long as travel costs are reimbursed. One administrator suggested, however, that unless more concrete benefits soon started to be realized, other duties of the representatives would begin to receive higher priority and their participation might decrease. ("They won't formally quit; things will just come up to prevent them from attending meetings".) Further, most representatives feel that, should UEP funding become limited, more tangible programs, assistance, materials, etc. would have to be in evidence for them to contribute financially to Network activities.

Overall, however, there remains a feeling of optimism and hope for the future. The stability of the group to this point and the increased interest of non-participating systems and others within the systems' hierarchies are indicators that future expectations for the Network are high.

## Summary of Findings

As noted in the beginning of the report, this documentation and analysis of the Urban Education Network was done so that the Fellows and the Urban Education Program staff might take a better look at their own organization

and effectively plan its continuing development. By describing the Network's context, its current status, and the perceptions and expectations of its members, it was hoped that a picture of the good attainment, strengths and weaknesses of the Network would emerge. The Fellows and staff could use such a picture to enhance the Network's strengths and reduce its weaknesses.

Attainment of Goals Set in 1978

In order to develop this picture it might be useful to begin with the seven goals expressed in the spring of 1978 and to briefly assess the extent of their attainment.

I. - To develop the ability of a small Urban Education staff to interact with 20 city school systems and 12 state departments of education fairly and effectively.

- All systems have not been reached and all are not interacting to the same extent, but 15 to 20 of the 31 members have formed a stable nucleus with prospects of increased use of the Urban Education Program resources.

II. - To provide an opportunity for development of collegial relationships among urban educators in the CEMREL region.

- Certainly the opportunity has been provided. The stability of representation and frequency of meetings has resulted in significant collegial contacts at meetings. However, this has not yet grown into strong relationships outside of meetings.

III. - To accomplish the compilation and dissemination of up to date research-based information about urban education to urban educators.

- The large number of testimonials to the wealth of such information received attests that this goal is being met.

IV. - To maintain and service the Network.

- The Network has been maintained and served enthusiastically and competently for the past three years. Apparent difficulties in this regard can be attributed to uncertainties in the UEP's relation to the NIE during 1979 and early 1980.

V. - To help Network partners to utilize r&d.

- This has yet to be accomplished fully, but the influence of information, consultants, technical assistance, and programs is beginning to be felt in 5-10 sites.

VI. - To match school district needs with CEMREL or other Network member's capabilities.

- District needs have been identified and prioritized. Although mechanisms are in place to meet them, it remains to be seen how effectively capabilities can be matched with needs.

VII. - To develop collaborative r&d efforts among school districts, state departments and CEMREL in order to improve school practice.

- The beginnings of such efforts are in evidence, but significant proof of impact on school practice is probably well in the future.

Overall the Network has done remarkably well in developing a foundation and achieving stability in the face of many demands and obstacles. Now that the structure has been established it remains to be seen if it will be useful enough to urban school districts and state education agencies to warrant their continued or increased involvement. By looking at the specific strengths and weaknesses carefully, it may be possible for the Fellows and the UEP staff to refine the Network and help insure that it develops its potential as an effective force for urban school improvement.

Strengths and Growth Points

In summary, the Urban Education Network has, after three years of development, the following strengths and potential growth points:

- Stability of RJPG and regularity of attendance

  The foundation has been laid for an established and ongoing organization. The consistent nucleus of 15-20 Urban Fellows, provides the prospect of continuity for the future.

- Emergence of Urban Fellow leadership and growing sense of ownership

  As more members take an active role in guiding the organization and begin to accept it as theirs, chances increase for the RJPG to become a self-generating and truly "urban education" network.

- Formation of subgroups

  The interest groups that have begun allow for flexibility within a network far-reaching enough to accommodate the region's diverse urban and state institutions.

- Indications of increasing involvement

  The expressed desires of previously inactive members to begin attending makes broader representation a possibility. (Expectations, however, seem to be centered more on strengthening the group now identified than on expanding it to include additional representation from other cities.)

- Models for involving smaller cities outside the formal Network

  Cases like the medium sized city described on page 22 demonstrate

the potential for using the Network to provide benefits to others in the region without technically admitting them as Urban Fellows.

- Interest and expected growth in inter-member contacts

  Projections of collaborative research, cooperation to solve common problems, and the possibility of sub-groups and/or state conferences suggest an increase in the quantity and substance of interaction.

- Emergence of the director level as a stragetic point for networking urban school systems and state education agencies

  Through a somewhat fortuitous process, directors and others in mid-management positions have come to make up the preponderance of Urban Fellows and support team members. Because of their critical circumstances as administrators with system-wide decision making power, access to top leadership and lines of communication to the school building level, directors turn out to be particularly appropriate as contacts for an urban education network. Not only are directors more likely to have the time or interest to participate in such efforts, but the limited nature of their prior inter-system contacts makes their participation an opportunity for their own professional growth. These facts both contribute to the current activities of the Network and bode well for its future success in getting benefits across and into the individual systems.

Weaknesses and Potential Problems

Along with its strengths, the Network has several weaknesses and potential problem areas - some arising out of the very characteristics which also provide hope for the future.

- Limitations of Urban Fellow in handling increased network involvement

  If the already active districts or agencies are paradigms of what others may expect should their participation increase, the single Urban Fellow may not be able to deal with all the demands from within and without his/her organization. At its current state of development the support team's role has not been clarified enough to alleviate this problem.

- Limitations of UEP Staff to meet increasing Network demands

  As requests for programs, consultants, information and technical assistance increase, an already busy UEP staff may be hard-pressed to provide the current level of services and support (let alone provide more). Since the budget has been set for the next 2½ years' operation, it appears unlikely that additional staff will be added.

- Lack of visible results

  The provisions made for member input into decision-making may have increased the feelings of self-governance and ownership, but they

may also have increased the time necessary for planning and decreased the number of tangible meeting outcomes. Now that a formal core network and interest groups centered on specific issues have been established, problems could arise if progress and resolution are not quick to come. Unless Fellows can point initially to the development of action steps and eventually to products and ongoing programs, they may not be able to justify either long range participation or an increase in their systems' contributions.

- Vulnerability of the director as Urban Fellow

  Just as the director level is strategic because of its mid-management position, it is also vulnerable to certain pressures. Because he or she is located somewhere between the superintendent and the school building there is the potential for being isolated from either. Without a power base renewed by the director's superiors or regular contact and influence with principals and teachers, it is likely that efforts to have impact on a system will be stymied. Further, if Network activities should become increasingly visible in the district or agency, political pressures or envy could nullify the representative's effectiveness and outweigh any resulting professional enhancement.

Given the strengths, weaknesses and trends revealed in the documentation on which this overview is based, it appears that the Urban Education

Network may truly define itself and demonstrate the extent of its capacities in the next two years. Indicators such as attendance, ownership, contacts, level of participation, and perceived benefits should clearly show whether the Network has been able to move beyond its initial stages of founding, planning, and development to one of consensus, action, and accomplishment. From responses given thus far, the Urban Education Network may drift out of meaningful existence if such movement is not discerned; if it _is_, the potential for growth, self-perpetuation, and, ultimately, improvement of urban schools could be extraordinary. It is hoped that this formative analysis will help the participants in the Urban Education Network plan its future and fulfill that promising potential.

II.

# THE FIRST THREE YEARS OF THE URBAN EDUCATION NETWORK: A COMMENTARY

by L. Allen Parker

## Executive Summary

The Urban Education Program (UEP) of CEMREL, Inc. in St. Louis initiated the Urban Education Network in 1977. This network is devoted to improving big city schools by means of facilitating the sharing of ideas, materials and moral support between researchers and urban educators and among the practitioners themselves. The Network links twenty large urban school districts in twelve midwestern states and the state departments of education (SEAs) in eleven of the states.

The development and initial impact of the Network is documented in the preceding formative analysis by Kenneth Pickens and Donald Miller. Here the Network is placed in the broader perspective on networking theory and practice.

### Networking and Urban Education

Networks devoted to improving education include people from different organizations who interact voluntarily to improve education by developing, adapting and/or adopting new practices and materials. This kind of network is not a "closely-coupled" system with members bound by well-defined contractual arrangements, which usually must involve significant money commitments to induce agreement. The nature of participation varies a good deal among members depending upon their particular interests, constraints and resources; only a fraction of the

participants are likely to be highly involved. These networks facilitate sharing of ideas, materials and moral support and sometimes enable collaborative projects among their participants.

As described in my "Comparative Overview" of 28 networks (Parker 1977a), a network can include participants of similar occupational status or a mixture of researchers, administrators and teachers. Networks range from unfunded local entities to federally-funded national groups. They can include participants from both public and non-public schools as well as from suburban and rural systems. But most networks have had difficulty involving urban public school districts.

Urban educators in different big public systems have less incentive to network than other educators. They have less need to consult people outside of their districts because they have more within-system colleagues with similar interests. District politics, regulations and teacher unions also discourage informal and minimally-funded sharing of information and moral support related to school improvement--the kind of sharing that networking is most likely to facilitate. However, in view of the productiveness of networks in other settings and the widespread problems in big city public schools, the UEP initiated a networking experiment in urban education.

Development of the Urban Education Network

Like many networks, the Urban Education Network emerged from a group that was not intended to be ongoing. the "Regional Joint Planning Group" (RJPG) initially was convened to help launch the UEP. The UEP staff, however, soon began using a networking strategy with the RJPG members. The group thus became a "deliberate informal network" in the six-phase pattern of change presented in my Comparative Overview. The Network now is in the next phase, building a formal network.

Like some networks, the Urban Education Network has not had a formally-recognized name. Most of the RJPG members initially saw the Network as CEMREL's project. However, they have taken increasing responsibility for the network and now generally consider it to be at least partially their own creation. A logical next step would be the formal naming of the Network with a title that does not include "CEMREL." Since the Network includes members that are or could be involved with other regional laboratories as well as CEMREL, it might be best to make the program staff more a member of the network than the named center of it. The Network could even formally involve more than one R&D organization.

The Network's development has resulted in two outcomes that could prove to be important models for some future networking efforts. First, the representatives formalized their involvement in the Network by obtaining

appointments from their systems and CEMREL to be "Urban Fellows." This title has enabled their ongoing sharing without having to seek approval from their systems each time they interact. Whereas such formal appointments would be out of character for many networks, they might sometimes be essential for linking participants from large bureaucracies.

Second, the majority of the Urban Fellows come from the director level of their systems. From the middle of their systems' hierarchies, they have access to superintendents on the one hand, and principals and teachers on the other. They consequently can pass on information from the Network to a wide range of practitioners in their systems. They also can ask other directors in their systems to assist in making linkages with participants elsewhere in the Network.

Key Ingredients of the Network

When examined with respect to the "key ingredients" of effective networks discussed in my research, the Urban Education Network has progressed fairly well, but has areas for further development. The key ingredients are:

- conviction that networking would assist improvement efforts
- a feeling of realistic shared purpose
- a mixture of information sharing and psychological support
- someone functioning as an effective facilitator
- voluntary participation and equal treatment

Although most of the participants have been committed to the Network, a few have not. Some questioned the productivity of networking systems from different states with different pupil populations. Other doubts

come from uncertainties in NIE support. With funding more secure, participants anticipate more involvement.

The Network has five objectives similar to those of most effective networks. They involve the sharing of ideas, materials and moral support. This sharing has been effective between the UEP staff and those Urban Fellows who choose to share. Fruitful sharing also takes place among the Fellows at Network meetings. However, there has been little sharing among the Fellows between meetings.

The UEP staff and two or three Urban Fellows appear to be able facilitators for the Network. Like many effective facilitators, the UEP staff function as generalists--linking participants with each other and with specialists rather than posing as experts themselves. There is concern, however, that the UEP staff could be encumbered by too many other responsibilities at CEMREL.

Lacking resources to do more than reimburse travel expenses, the facilitators have had to rely upon volunteer participation. Both the systems involved and the Fellows themselves have donated significant amounts of time to the Network.

The Fellows from urban districts generally feel that they have received fair treatment. But several Fellows from the state agencies have indicated that the SEAs have been inadequately involved. The Network now is attempting to rectify this perceived shortcoming by holding special

meetings of the SEA Fellows to identify ways in which they can become more productively involved.

Impact of the Network

The school improvement that results from networking among researchers and practitioners is impossible to quantify precisely. The Network's participants assume that some of their sharing of information and moral support will ultimately result in positive changes in the performance and attitudes of students, but they measure the Network's impact primarily by its influence on the development of new programs or materials and on changes in existing practices and structures. Impact on students is impossible to measure in causal configurations involving many influences, some of them including chains of causes. Participants in a network can gain enough sense of its impact, however, to be able to decide if and how they will be involved in it.

As documented by Pickens and Miller, most of the Urban Fellows have positive feelings about the impact of the network on their own professional development. Like most effective networks, however, only a fraction of the Fellows have been sufficiently involved to have experienced substantial additional benefits. Fifteen of the twenty Fellows from urban districts had found significant amounts of information from the Network to be of sufficient value to pass it along to others in their systems. Seven of these Fellows subsequently observed definite changes in the activities and programs of administrators and teachers in

his system have been positively influenced. And the Network's first collaborative project--the development of an Oral and Written communications guidebook--has involved 788 students from two districts in a successful pilot project which is expanding to other districts.

Importance of the Next two Years

The next two years of the Network's development are seen to be of critical importance to its subsequent continuation. The Network has two years of secure funding during which to expand its activities. It also has sufficiently developed its structure, operations and credibility that it should experience minimal organizational constraints. The already-observed influences on the Urban Fellows will have time to translate into impact on the programs, practices and materials within their systems. In addition, the expanding activities of the Network could influence many practitioners in other systems within the Network and in some systems beyond it due to the facilitating activities of the UEP and related CEMREL programs.

In two years, the Urban Fellows, CEMREL staff, and NIE officials should be able to gain enough sense of the Network's costs and benefits to decide how they wish to support its continuation. They also should have learned enough about urban education networking to determine how it could be adapted for use in other regions of the nation. If all goes well, everyone will conclude that they have participated in the creation of an increasingly effective network of practitioners and researchers committed to urban school improvement. The Network would be a model for enabling urban school improvement throughout the nation.

## Introduction

During 1977, the Urban Education Program (UEP) of CEMREL, the regional educational Laboratory in St. Louis, took up the challenge of networking big city school systems. A variety of networks devoted to improving education had recently come to the attention of the National Institute of Education and the applied research and development community in education. For the most part, these networks did not include practitioners from big districts. Despite the fact that big city systems had immense problems, urban educators were not using this strategy for grass roots change. The UEP consequently embarked upon an experiment to apply networking to urban school improvement.

The UEP initiated the Urban Education Network with participants from the twenty largest school districts in twelve Midwestern states. Each of these districts had 50,000 or more pupils or was the largest district in the state. The Network also includes representatives from the state departments of education (SEAs) in eleven of the states. A chronology of events in the Network's history is given at the end of the report containing this commentary. Other parts of the report list the urban districts and SEAs in the Network and give the findings of a formative analysis of the Network based on an extensive survey of its participants.

This commentary places the findings in the broader context of "networkng theory" explicated in my 1977 Comparative Overview of 28 networks for educational innovation and problem solving (Parker 1977a) and in a book I

am now compiling with information from over fifty networks. Here I first describe networks for educational improvement and the challenge of networking big city school districts. The development of the Urban Education Network is then compared with a generalized pattern for the development of networks devoted to school improvement. Next, the Network is examined in relation to ingredients found to be key in effective networking. The commentary concludes with a consideration of the Network's impact and the critical importance of the next two years in its continuing development.

## Networking and Big City School Districts

Networks devoted to improving education include people from different organizations who interact voluntarily in their attempts to improve education by developing, adapting and/or adopting new practices and materials. This kind of network is not a "closely-coupled" consortium with members bound by well-defined contractual arrangements. Functional contractual agreements among school systems and R&D organizations usually require large money commitments by one or more parties in order to compensate other parties for the costs that their contracted changes require. To the contrary, linkages among participants in a network for innovation and problem solving generally are non-compulsory and require relatively little money for their operation. The extent and nature of participation consequently is likely to vary a good deal among members depending upon their particular interests, constraints and resources; only a fraction of the participants are likely to be highly involved at any one time and some might never do more than indicate that they wish to remain on the network's mailing list or are available for brief phone calls. These networks facilitate sharing of ideas, materials and psychological support among their participants and sometimes enable the initiation of collaborative development projects among small groups of the participants.

A network's participants can all be of similar occupational status, as in the Greater Boston Biology Teachers described by Hedin (1980a). Or a network can include both administrators and teachers as in most of the

two dozen networks in the alternative schools movement (Parker 1980a). Networks also can involve researchers, developers and teacher educators who assist practitioners with their innovation and problem solving, as in the Individually Guided Education (IGE) movement (Parker 1977b) and the North Dakota Study Group on Evaluation (Hedin 1980b). Networks devoted to school improvement range from unfunded local entities like Denver's Options in Education committee (Parker 1980a) to federally-funded national groups like the Teachers' Centers Exchange network (Devaney 1980) and the National Diffusion Network (Parker 1977c). They link participants from private, parochial, alternative and conventional public schools as well as people from different suburban systems and rural districts. But, as indicated in my Comparative Overview, networks generally have had minimal representation from public schools in big cities.

This lack of urban district involvement in networks devoted to school improvement has several causes. Most educators in big systems have many colleagues to draw upon within their districts. For example, the Boston Public schools has nineteen high schools with a total of over fifty biology teachers, whereas most of the fifty suburban districts and independent schools represented in Greater Boston Biology Teachers have only one high school and fewer than five biology teachers. Only at the superintendent level in a big system is there likely to be a lack of colleagues with similar concerns. (Thus, it is not surprising that a semi-formal network of superintendents existed in the early 1970s (Parker 1976a) and another is now being coordinated by NIE.)

Another important factor reducing network participation by most big city practitioners is unions. For the most part, big city teachers' unions disapprove of their members being involved in development activities for which their time is not reimbursed. To the contrary, many teachers from suburban and rural systems as well as alternative, parochial and private schools will use their own time for the kind of learning and sharing that networking is most likely to provide.

Involvement of urban educators also can be impeded by district regulations. For example, janitor union contracts in many big districts require all teachers to leave their buildings within an hour after the official school day ends unless the janitors are paid overtime. Such regulations would make it impossible for an unfunded network like Greater Boston Biology Teachers to rotate its monthly after-school meetings among the schools of its members. In addition, the shifting politics and financial pressures of most big city systems have made their teachers and administrators cautious about undertaking innovations for fear that they will not gain continuing support for their efforts. When not trying to improve their schools, they have little incentive to join networks.

Many urban educators belong to national professional associations, but these usually are not an adequate substitute for networks devoted to improving education. This kind of network emerges and functions to assist innovators and problem solvers. Although associations do provide some information sharing and moral support for improvement efforts, their leading members often are more concerned about internal politics of the

association and maintenance of standards in its field. Many networks devoted to school improvement consequently are created by dissatisfied innovators and problem solvers who are members of established associations that fail to meet their needs. Since networks usually are more flexible than associations and less likely to be ends in themselves, they can be more effective means to assist innovation and problem solving. (It is noteworthy, however, that the differences between a network and an association decrease in the later phases of network development listed below and elaborated in my Comparative Overview.)

Like more innovators, problem solvers in urban districts at times need to share their ideas, materials and difficulties with similarly-concerned individuals in order to gain new insights and moral support. This need is heightened by the fact that urban district problems are likely to be larger than those in suburban systems - their financial constraints are greater, a larger portion of their pupils are educationally disadvantaged, their bureaucracies are less flexible. Even if they can find some similarly-concerned colleagues within their systems, they are likely to gain a wider range of relevant ideas and materials by being linked into a network of practitioners from other big city districts and of urban education researchers from supportive R&D organizations. Moreover, such a network could give them the psychological lift that comes from the sense of being part of a broader movement rather than an isolated local effort.

In view of the immense need of urban districts and the fruitfulness of

networking evident by 1977 in suburban contexts, it seemed worthwhile to adapt the strategy to urban school improvement. Many practices and products relevant to urban education had emerged from twenty years of educational R&D in general. Transferrable innovations also had been developed by practitioners in individual urban districts. A few of these programs, practices and materials had been adapted or adopted by a few urban districts due to the efforts of the National Diffusion Network and several other networks. However, the possibilities and constraints for most urban public schools are sufficiently unique that a separate networking effort among big city districts appeared warranted. With the increasing recognition of networking as an educational change strategy,* CEMREL took on the challenge of initiating a network devoted to urban school improvement.

---

* After completing my 1971 doctoral dissertation on innovators and networking, I disseminated a dozen copies to officials in the U.S. Office of Education (OE) and Harvard professors influential with national policy makers in educational R&D. No one responded in 1971. As nearly as I could ascertain, the educational R&D establishment was preoccupied with large "programmatic" projects like national curriculum development efforts. A change strategy that linked together local innovators was of little or no interest. By 1975 when an official at NIE discovered my dissertation, however, a growing number of officials in this newly-founded agency and in OE were changing their attitude. Less federal and foundation money was available for large R&D projects, and many of the programs and products developed by previous large projects had not achieved the widespread diffusion originally anticipated by funding agencies. On the other hand, officials from several state and local education agencies had played a key role in designing the OE-based National Diffusion Network (NDN) so that it would help diffuse innovations developed by local practitioners. And NIE had created the "Network Development Staff" to foster research on networking as a means to increse school capacity for problem solving. By the Summer of 1977, the NIE unit had held two seminars on networking for its officials and some of their leading policy advisors. As documented in Parker (1977c), NDN had by then by-passed uninterested top-level OE officials and obtained funding commitments directly from the U.S. Congress. Consequently, the educational R&D establishment were coming to recognize networking as a grass-roots change strategy with substantial potential for school improvement.

## Development of the Urban Education Network

My Comparative Overview of 28 networks presents a six-position pattern of network change which is applicable to the Urban Education Network. Very few of the 28 networks have been in all six positions; most have changed through only two or three of them. Although most networks have experienced pressures to move to the next position in the pattern, the paticipants in many networks deliberately stop "development" at some middle position because they do not consider the later positions to be preferrable. The positions include...

1--isolated innovators and problem solvers

2--informal contact network

3--deliberate informal network

4--building a formal network

5--institutionalizing the network

6--dissipation of the network's spirit

When Harriet Willis began planning the Urban Education Program, she was aware of the existence of many isolated innovators and problem solvers in urban districts from the time she was a teacher in the St. Louis Public Schools. She also had made many informal contacts with urban educators in other districts during her subsequent CEMREL work on reading programs. Moreover, through CEMREL, she became aware of the existence of a wide range of products, practices and research findings developed or compiled by the nation's educational R&D community. It seemed logical to combine the innovators, contacts and resources in the UEP.

To assist her in planning such a combination, Willis created the "Regional Joint Planning Group" (RJPG). She asked the superintendents of the twenty largest school systems in CEMREL's region to send representatives to the RJPG. Knowing the influence of SEA policies on urban education, she also invited the chief state school officers to send representatives. In addition to advising her on developing the UEP, the RJPG was to help CEMREL plan and implement an NIE-funded conference on teaching and learning in urban schools to be held in the summer of 1978. The initiation of a network was not on the agenda of the first RJPG meeting in October 1977, nor was it a subject of discussion at the meeting. Although the participants in the meeting could serve as an informal contact network (position 2), there was no deliberate attempt to form an entity in which its members were consciously aware of it as a distinct network with a purpose.

Between October and February, when the UEP held the first meeting of a task force of RJPG members who had volunteered to help prepare for the conference, the UEP staff and other CEMREL personnel began discussing the networking strategy and its possible applications to CEMREL's programs. The task force and the second RJPG meeting, in April 1978, also discussed the applicability of networking to the UEP. And, in May, I discussed it with the UEP staff as part of a consulting trip I made to CEMREL. Although the word "network" was very much in the UEP jargon by that time, no decision was made to build a formal network. Instead a deliberate informal network (position 3) emerged, coordinated by the UEP. The UEP staff continued to call "RJPG" meetings, while at other times speaking of

the "UEP network" or the "Urban Education Network." In fact, there never has been a formal naming and recognition of the Network, despite the fact that the UEP staff have been applying networking strategy since the summer of 1978.

The lack of a formal initiation of the Network seems to have resulted from indecision on the part of both the RJPG representatives and the UEP staff. Since the RJPG members were initially recruited to advise the UEP, most of them at first saw the emerging network as CEMREL's creation for CEMREL's purposes. As Kenneth Pickens and Donald Miller found in their survey (see the preceding formative analysis), only gradually did many of the members come to see the Network as belonging to them as much as to CEMREL. This change in attitude resulted from the continuing UEP staff tactics of turning to the RJPG for direction in coordinating the Network's activities and of responding to the reactions of the members when the staff occasionally undertook initiatives without an opportunity to consult the members.

On its side, the staff was cautious in pushing to formalize the Network because neither CEMREL's leadership nor NIE's officials had envisioned a network when UEP began. Initially the UEP staff treated the Network as an experiment within its program rather than as the major aspect of the program.

When the staff and CEMREL's leadership decided that the experiment was working well enough to deserve expansion and explicit funding, it was

presented to NIE. The usual funding-source objection to networking was raised--namely, that its outcome was not sufficiently predictable because the control of the network lies in the hands of its participants rather than its coordinating staff. Funding sources understandably fear that networks will end up doing things that lie outside of the funding sources' mandates or that a network's participants will never develop a strong thrust in any direction if widely divergent expectations exist. Moreover, funding agencies often wish to support initiatives with broad policy implications rather than means that are more likely to have an impact only on individual classrooms or schools. For these reasons and probably others known only to NIE, it took CEMREL until June of 1980 to obtain a funding commitment from NIE for more than a few months extension of the experiment in urban education networking. Thus, only since June has the UEP been able to turn its energies primarily towards building a formal network (position 4 in the pattern of network development).

Some networks I have studied can remain indefinitely at position 3 or can waver between position 3 and position 4 and still operate effectively. A network's effectiveness as a mechanism for school improvement stems in part from its relative informality and flexibility as compared to established consortiums or professional associations. Some networks never develop elaborate operating procedures or make formal decisions concerning their names. For example, in 1976 Priscilla Claman wrote of the ten-year-old "Boston West Biology Teachers" using the name then in most wide-spread use among its members (Claman 1976a); four years later, this name is used hardly at all in this deliberately informal network (Hedin, 1980a).

It could be, however, that for some networks a formal naming is important for clarifying the nature and extent of the network. This could be the case with the Urban Education Network in particular, for as Pickens and Miller found, the Network's participants use a wide range of names when referring to the network including "UEP," "RJPG" (or even RGPJ), "UEP Network," "CEMREL," "CEMREL's Network," and "Harriet's Network." None of these names implies clear ownership--either partial or full--of the network by its participants. Perhaps a formal naming is needed to clarify the nature and governance of the Network. Since "Urban Education Network" is already in use part of the time, this title might be a starting point for reaching an agreed-upon name. Something like "Midwest" might be added to the name to better define its geographical extent. Since the Network includes members that are or could be involved with other regional laboratories as well as CEMREL, it might be best to make the UEP more a member of the Network than the named center of it. The Network could even formally involve more than one R&D organization.

An urban education network is likely not only to accept considerable formalization, but to find it highly appropriate. As soon as the UEP staff began talking about the RJPG becoming a permanent network, the representatives to it requested that CEMREL arrange some kind of formal recognition of their position. Whereas participants in many suburban and alternative school networks prefer to be involved in a very loose way, the RJPG participants said that they needed a formalization of their positions in order to deal effectively with their districts or agencies and be free to interact with others in the Network. The UEP staff and

the RJPG then decided to create "Urban Fellows" whose role and title would be formally approved by CEMREL and their systems. Certificates indicating their official position also were issued to the Urban Fellows. Each Urban Fellow then interacted as much as he or she wished with the UEP staff and other Urban Fellows without worrying about obtaining district or agency approval on a case by case basis. Thus, by means of a formal title, the Urban Education Network opened the door for at least one individual within each big system to link with individuals in the other big districts and agencies.

Another important development appears to have been the kind of individuals who have become Urban Fellows. As the Pickens-Miller survey found, the majority of the Urban Fellows are at approximately the director level in their systems. Being middle management with functional responsibilities that require interaction with most units in their systems, many of the directors have access not only to superintendents and other central system administrators, but also to principals and teachers elsewhere in the system. Consequently, the directors appear to be excellent disseminators in the ideas, products and practices they gain from the network.

On the other hand, a number of people Pickens interviewed expressed some reservations about the director level. It was argued that an ineffective director might end up isolated from administrators and teachers alike. Or, the Urban Fellow could become a bottleneck who constricts interactions between other practitioners in his or her district/agency and

other systems in the Network. Now that the Network is encouraging each Fellow to develop a "local support team" of other administrators within his or her system, the possibilities of a bottleneck might be reduced. It is too soon to know how support teams will operate or to be certain about the advantages and disadvantages of directors as Urban Fellows. However, it could well prove to be the case that directors generally make excellent formal linkers in a network of big systems.

## Key Ingredients of the Urban Education Network

In examining the 28 networks for my 1977 Comparative Overview, I found five ingredients to be characteristic of the networks that were relatively effective at assisting their participants to improve education. Subsequent research into an additional two dozen networks has confirmed this finding except for the first ingredient which consequently has been broadened in concept. The five now are:

1--a conviction that networking would assist improvement efforts

2--a feeling of realistic shared purpose

3--a mixture of information sharing and psychological support

4--someone funtioning as an effective facilitator

5--voluntary participation and equal treatment

An examination of the Urban Education Network with respect to these factors can throw further light on its development and current situation.

### Commitment to Networking

Most of the twenty urban districts initially contacted by Willis agreed that networking among the systems could enhance their individual improvement efforts. In addition, a majority of the SEAs in the twelve-state region agreed that they could gain from involvement in the network. However, the superintendent of one district refused to have his system participate because he thinks networking will not be productive for his system. Several chief state school officers have also been skeptical, although only one has refused to designate a representative.

The lack of involvement of several designated participants from districts and agencies later pointed to some skepticism about the Network's value.

According to the participants Pickens and I interviewed, this skepticism comes in part from the conviction that many of the districts are so different in size and situation that they can share little of use with each other. Some also express reservations about offering to share effective programs with other districts for fear such sharing will strengthen the recipients in the competition for federal funds which to some extent is inevitable among the systems. And, some Urban Fellows are cautious about sharing their problems for fear their systems' would look ineffective. In addition to these reservations, there are the long-standing differences between urban districts and SEAs in many states. These differences are epitomized by the contrast between the SEA official who spoke of needing to represent each and every district in his state regardless of size and the Fellow from an urban district who stressed that his system enrolled over 25% of the public school pupils in the state.

In a closely-coupled consortium with well-defined contractual arrangements, such skepticism might be disastrous, but in a network for innovation and problem solving, it need not be so. Most networks have found that only a fraction of listed members want to be highly involved participants. For example, Greater Boston Biology Teachers lists about 150 participants but anticipates that only 20 to 30 people will attend monthly meetings. Networks that emphasize individual participation

generally have found that fifty people is about the maximum number who can attend a meeting and still have each of them feel that his or her viewpoint can be presented if she or he wishes to be heard. On the other hand, networks in both the IGE and alternative schools movements have found fewer than a dozen participants to be too few to assure an active network. Thirty-one members appears to be a comfortable size for the Urban Education Network; it allows any Urban Fellow who wants to participate actively to make presentations at meetings, while at the same time it allows some systems to be inactive. The Fellows seem to have reached a similar conclusion regarding the size of the Network, for most of them wish to see more active participation rather than an increase in the number of urban districts represented. A substantial reduction in the number of members also should be avoided, for fear that the Network ends with less than the critical mass necesary to have a core of actively involved members.

The Fellows think that more extensive participation will emerge if the Network increases its benefits to the systems. The fact that there still is considerable skepticism they attribute to the small number or unpredictableness of Network activities in the past. Now that NIE support seems more secure, the Fellows anticipate substantial Network progress and an end to the skepticism. My studies of other networks lead me to concur with this anticipation <u>if</u> the Network's facilitators are not encumbered by other responsibilities from becoming more active.

Sense of Shared Purpose

Progress can be anticipated in part because throughout the Network's history, its participants have had a fairly strong sense of realistic shared purpose, the second key ingredient of effective networks. As Pickens and Miller explicate, by the summer of 1978 the UEP staff and the Urban Fellows generally saw the network as having six complementary objectives:

1) initiating collegial relations with other urban educators
2) gaining access to CEMREL's resources and programs
3) learning about relevant research done anywhere in the nation
4) sharing information about their own successful programs
5) linking Fellows who have needs with Fellows who have resources
6) developing collaborative programs

The first five objectives are similar to those in many networks that are effective at assisting their participants to improve education. However, the sixth objective is one many networks do not attempt to achieve, unless one considers network meetings or annual conferences to be "collaborative projects." It is unusual for more than two or three independent network participants to reach consensus on the details of a longer term collaborative project such as the joint development of instructional materials. Among over fifty networks I have studied, only the Alternative Schools Network (ASN) in Chicago (Parker 1980a) has been able to initiate a number of collaborative projects involving five to twelve schools in each project. The 45 independent schools which constitute the ASN learned to cooperate on the details of joint efforts

because they discovered that whereas funding agencies refused to support the individual alternative schools, funding could be won for joint projects of many schools. Some other networks have envisioned similar arrangements, but for the most part only achieved smaller collaborations involving two or three schools or systems.

Sensing the unlikelihood of a joint project among many school systems, the Urban Education Network has created four or five "Research and Development Utilization" units focused on specific areas of concern given high priority by different systems. It is assumed that some of these units will lead to cooperative projects but that others will end up being study groups. The "oral and written communications" unit has in fact developed a collaborative project involving CEMREL and two urban districts. Although other collaborative projects are anticipated in the future, the experience of other networks would indicate that this objective of the Network is likely to result in only one or two such projects in full swing at any one time. The sharing of ideas, materials and moral support is the primary outcome of most networks devoted to school improvement.

Information Sharing and Moral Support

In view of its objectives, one would expect the Urban Education Network to foster a mixture of information sharing and moral support, the third key ingredient of networks. The Pickens-Miller study found a good deal of research information flowing between the UEP staff and Urban Fellows. The Fellows also reported that they gained moral support and personal

career growth from their interations with each other at RJPG meetings. In addition, between RJPG meetings, the UEP staff has been highly involved in projects with three cities and has had instances of involvement in activities of eleven additional urban districts. However, between meetings, only one of the Urban Fellows has clearly drawn extensively at his own initiative upon the other Fellows for information and moral support in his efforts to improve his district. The Network's pattern of between-meeting interactions probably must expand to include much more inter-Fellow exchange if the Network is to become highly effective. Both the UEP staff and the leading Urban Fellows are focusing on this needed expansion in planning future Network activities.

Effective Facilitation

The extent of the sharing in which the UEP staff has been directly involved is a reflection of the facilitation skills of Harriet Doss Willis, her assistant Nellie Harrison and other CEMREL staff who have worked with them. Every time I talk with Willis, I am struck by her similarity to other network facilitators I have interviewed. She is a walking information clearinghouse, who will refer one to appropriate sources rather than attempt to impose her own answer on one's problem. She is savvy about both the personalities and the politics of the people she must link together or tap for resources. She juggles conflicting norms and expectations from diverse people: NIE officials, CEMREL's directors, Fellows from urban districts, Fellows from SEAs, CEMREL personnel in other programs, her own staff, and leaders in the nation's educational R&D community. Due to the extensive demands upon her time,

Willis often is difficult to reach, but coordination of the Network continues under Harrison's able direction. These two women have involved several other CEMREL staff in complementary roles so that one has a sense of a facilitating team rather than total dependence on one or two people. This team appears to function well so long as its members do not take on too many CEMREL responsibilities outside of the UEP. There is considerable concern, however, that the UEP staff members tend to have too many other tasks.

One of the Urban Fellows, John Grate from Cincinnati, provides facilitating assistance for the UEP team as part of his role as Chairperson of the Network's Advisory committee. One or two other Fellows have helped on occasion and would be available for extensive assistance if Grate were forced to reduce his commitment. Thus, the Network's facilitating function appears to be well taken care of by a combination of UEP staff and leading Urban Fellows.

The UEP pattern of providing for the facilitating function of a network is very similar to that in many other networks. It is noteworthy, in particular, that the facilitation is done mainly by individuals who were not selected for their expertise on urban education, but for traits that would make them good at communicating with a variety of people and linking them with outside experts on various aspects of urban education. Many networks have found that most experts make poor facilitators because they tend to impose their own opinions on participants seeking assistance rather than linking them with other experts. Even when specialists avoid

giving their own opinions, they are likely to become frustrated with being network facilitators because they want to concentrate on working with people concerned about their speciality rather than on matching participants with whatever kinds of specialists or practitioners would best meet their needs.

Due to the shortcomings of specialists, many networks avoid hiring them as facilitators. For example, the facilitating team of the Teachers' Centers Exchange network (Devaney 1981) is headed by a journalist, Kathy Devaney, and includes social scientists, researchers and teachers who have directed a teachers center. The Allied Medical Education Network (Claman & Parker 1976b) provides another outstanding example with a facilitating team led by a public relations expert, Ralph Kuhli, and including over a dozen staff members with social science backgrounds, who provide information to and link a diversity of specialized medical societies, allied health schools and research centers. A third example is the networking activities of Diane Lassman and her staff of generalists at The EXCHANGE of the Minneapolis Public Schools/University of Minnesota Teacher Center (Parker 1980b).

The facilitators of a minority of networks are well established experts in their networks' contents, for example, Daniel Hull of the Laser/Electro-Optics Education network (Parker 1976b) or Vito Perrone of the North Dakota Study Group on Evaluation (Hedin 1980b). Moreover, the effective facilitators who begin their network coordination activities as non-specialists usually learn a good deal about the technical content of

their networks. After two or three years, some network participants begin turning to some of these facilitators for their advice as well as for referrals to other experts. From the start, this has been true of some participants in the Urban Education Network, who have consulted Willis concerning not only the many language arts experts she knows, but also her own experiences as a reading specialist. However, Willis and other expert coordinators continue to emphasize their role as linkers and facilitators rather than as specialists.

Voluntary Participation and Equal Treatment

Facilitators downplay their own specialized expertise not only to enhance their linking function, but also to increase voluntary participation and equal treatment in the network, the final key ingredient of effective networks. There is no question that the Fellows are participating as volunteers in the Urban Education Network. Although their transportation to RJPG meetings is reimbursed by CEMREL, their systems donate part of their travel and meeting time and the Fellows themselves contribute some of their own time. For example, the RJPG meetings have usually begun on a Sunday or a national holiday in order to reduce the amount of time the Fellows spend away from their offices. Their systems and the Fellows themselves also contribute whatever time and resources they use to prepare presentations for Network meetings or to provide information for the UEP staff between meetings. As with other networks, this voluntary participation is important becuse it puts pressure upon a network to deliver information, moral support, collegiality and other benefits that make it worth the time and resources of its participants. This trait

distinguishes networks from many established professional associations, which people usually must join if they wish to advance in certain professions.

Voluntary participation is enchanced by equal treatment. If every Urban Fellow knows that she or he will be given "air time" at Network meetings, he or she is more likely to want to participate. Egalitarianism also is evident in the way the facilitating staff treat participants and in the way participants treat each other. During Pickens and my interviews, we sensed that the staff were given equal treatment to the participants from urban districts and they to each other.

The Urban Fellows from SEAs appear to have been less involved. During the last year, several Fellows from SEAs became vocal about their sense that SEA Fellows were marginally involved, due both to their own lack of initiative and to the tendency of the UEP staff and Fellows from urban districts to focus upon district concerns before SEA interests. The Network responded by beginning to hold special meetings for the SEA Fellows in order to identify ways in which they can become more involved in future activities and development of the Network. Out of these meetings are emerging plans for a joint project involving at least two SEAs, CEMREL and hopefully the National Assessment of Education Progress. Any urban districts that wish to be involved in the project are welcome. It probably can be assumed that by the SEAs taking a lead in a collaborative project their sense of unequal involvement will be eliminated.

## Impact of the Urban Education Network

The Urban Education Network has had some impact as measured by the achievement of its shared objectives. It has provided collegial relations for the majority of its Fellows. It has given them substantial quantities of relevant research information. It has provided access to programs of CEMREL and several other research and development organizations. Moreover, the RJPG meetings and the UEP's Status Study of Exemplary School Programs have proved to be useful vehicles for sharing information among the Fellows about their programs. Everyone is agreed that a good deal more could be done in the way of linking Fellows who have needs with Fellows who have resources, but this kind of linking has at least begun. Finally, one collaborative project has resulted--the development of a guidebook entitled A Unit On Oral and Written Communications by staff of CEMREL and two urban districts.

Most networks have found it very difficult to measure impact precisely for several reasons. The major benefit of most networks is information sharing and psychological support that assists in the development of innovations or changes in programs, practices and materials. However, networks find it impossible to verify many of the significant information transfers they facilitate because practitioners forget the sources of some of the ideas for their changes in practices and materials. A year after an Urban Fellow picks up an idea for a new practice from another Fellow during a casual conversation at a Network meeting, he or she often will not remember the conversation. To make matters worse, it is

impossible to determine how much of any change should be attributed to the person who first had a new concept versus the network facilitator who brought the person together with a user of the concept, versus the user who solved the problems encountered in implementing it. Further complications in determining credit for impact are introduced if there are additional linkers between the originator of the idea and the teacher who ultimately uses it. Even if credit could be allocated, it usually would prove impossible to measure the extent of impact on the academic performance, social attitudes and enjoyment of students.

Similar problems are evident in trying to measure the impact of psychological or moral support. How can one translate the good feelings and personal growth resulting from Network activities into measurable changes in the behaviors of Urban Fellows that in turn result in measurable changes in the behaviors of the administrators and teachers they come in contact with, who in turn influence students? Such causal chains are difficult or impossible to quantify.

Only in the case of the 13 independent school networks in the alternative schools movement have I found apparent evidence that really significant changes might have resulted from the provisions of moral support. Since most of the teachers and administrators in these networks work for salaries ranging from $100 per month to one half of the pay of public school teachers, they often must have second jobs or live on savings. In addition, practitioners in independent alternative schools usually must teach in poorer facilities with fewer supplies than are characteristic of

schools in public systems. And, these teachers generally work long hours to individualize instruction. It all adds up to "burn out" and withdrawal from alternative education after two to five years of service. In this situation, the teachers tell me that participation in a network can provide vital moral support that keeps them going for one more year, which in turn may be enough time to find replacements so that their schools will not need to close for lack of staff. If the students in an alternative school are receiving a better education than they would in conventional schools (an "if" that would be difficult to quantify), then the moral support of a network can indeed have a significant impact. However, one can never "know" in the laboratory science sense the extent of the actual impact of the moral support for nor can one ever create the reality of seeing if the alternative teachers actually would have quit a year or two earlier if they had not been in their networks.

Network members "know" intuitively the value for them of their participation in a network and can act upon this "personal knowledge" (a la philosopher Michael Polanyi) to decide whether or not to continue participating. It is a personal decision based upon one's own set of values and internal equations concerning the extent to which the network helps participants with change efforts. What are benefits of networking for some participants can be costs for others. The Pickens-Miller report indicates, for example, that some Urban Fellows consider their own presentations at RJPG meetings to be "opportunities" (and therefore benefits) provided by the Network for their systems, while some other

Fellows consider presentations to be costs because the presenter must take time to prepare and might give out information that helps other systems in the competition for federal funds.

The impossibility of quantifying precisely the total impact of networking does not preclude partial documentation. By simply asking its participants, one can ascertain the extent to which they acknowledge having been benefited by a network and the amount of impact they think is happening as a result in their systems. When the people Pickens interviewed were questioned in this regard, almost all of the Fellows had positive feelings about the Network's impact on their own professional development. Since only a fraction of the members of most effective networks become highly involved, it is not surprising that fewer Fellows have experienced and reported substantial additional benefits. Fifteen of the twenty Fellows from urban districts found significant amounts of information from the Network to be of sufficient value to pass along to others in their systems. Seven of these Fellows subsequently observed definite changes in activities or programs not only of other centeral administrators, but also of principals and teachers in one or more school buildings per system. Among these seven Fellows, the one most involved in the Network estimated that over 15% of the principals and teachers in his system had been impacted by information, workshops and other inputs he attributed to the Network's influence.

The one collaborative project initiated by the Network also is noteworthy in its impact beyond the two Urban Fellows and the CEMREL staff it has involved. The Unit on Oral and Written Communications has been pilot tested by 36 teachers in 17 schools with 788 students from two urban districts. Since the tests came out well, several other districts from the Network have expressed interest in trying the guidebook, and workshops for their teachers are being planned. In addition, it could be of use to many smaller districts in CEMREL's region. When a network does produce a concrete output such as this guidebook, it is possible to determine its impact in a more quantitative manner than is characteristic for most network outputs. As noted earlier, however, most networks have had few collaborative projects resulting in such projects.

## Importance of the Next Two Years

Most of the Fellows feel that the Urban Education Network has made adequate progress so far in light of the organizational challenges that it has had to overcome. They also feel, however, that the Network must provide more assistance in their change efforts and thereby have more widespread impact in their systems if it is to continue to hold their commitment. The attitude widely expressed is that the Network is now organized and must produce a larger quantity of outputs relevant to school improvement.

It will then be possible to examine how quickly and widely the benefits of the Network spread both among and within the participating systems. It also will be possible for the staff and Urban Fellows to learn which kinds of projects and information sharing are most effective in the Network. Ideally they will learn how to optimize urban education networking. In addition CEMREL will begin to learn what kinds of spin-offs and multiplier effects can be expected from the Network to smaller school districts--either directly from the big systems or indirectly through the activities of other CEMREL programs such as the Regional Exchange. On the other hand, the UEP staff will learn the extent to which it transfers materials and concepts compiled in other CEMREL programs in the Network. All this experience can be documented in such a manner that researchers and urban educators in other regions of the nation can determine which components of the Network can be adapted to create additional networks of urban districts and SEAs. In this way,

the experiment initiated by the UEP staff and now owned by most of the Fellows involved in the Network could make a significant contribution to school improvement not only in the Midwest but in the entire nation.

The Network's progress during the next two years should give CEMREL, NIE and the state and local educational agencies involved considerable sense of the impact that the Network is having on local programs, practices and materials. This impact will come in part from the products of applied research and development that the Urban Fellows discover through the Network. It also will stem from the new ideas that they gain from sharing their difficulties and accomplishments. And, if will result from their increased determination to keep working to solve the apparently intransigent problems of urban education. They will not feel isolated in their efforts at school improvement. Instead they will draw strength from knowing they are part of an increasingly effective network of practitioners and researchers committed to improving urban education. They will have created a model for enabling urban school improvement through the nation.

## References


Claman, Priscilla H. and L. Allen Parker. "Boston West Biology Teachers." Cambridge, Massachusetts: Center on Technology and Society (CTS), 1976a.

_____. "Allied Medical Education Network." Cambridge: CTS, 1976b.

Devaney, Kathleen. Article on Networking as Practiced by the Exchange. Education and Urban Society, forthcoming August, 1981.

Hedin-Pourghasemi, Marianne. "Greater Boston Biology Teachers: A Local Network in Action." Cambridge: Center on Techonology and Society (CTS), 1980a.

_____. "A Case History of the North Dakota Study Group on Evaluation." Cambridge: CTS, 1980b.

Parker, L. Allen. "The Superintendents Network and PROJECT OPEN." Cambridge: CTS, 1976a.

_____. "Laser/Electo-Optics Education Network." Cambridge: CTS, 1976b.

_____. "Networks for Innovation and Problem Solving and Their Use for Improving Education: A Comparative Overview." Cambridge: CTS, 1977a.

_____. "Individually Guided Education Movement and Its Networks." Cambridge: CTS, 1977b.

_____. "The National Diffusion Network." Cambridge: CTS, 1977c.

_____. The Alternative Schools Movement and Its Networks. Cambridge, CTS, 1980a.

_____. "The Networking Activities of The EXCHANGE." Cambridge, CTS, 1980b.

III.

APPENDICES

A. Methodology For the Formative Analysis

B. Survey Questionnaire for the Formative Analysis

C. Interview Questions for the Formative Analysis

D. Chronology of the Urban Education Network Activities

E. List of Network Members

## APPENDIX A: METHODOLOGY FOR THE FORMATIVE ANALYSIS

In order to document the progress and impact of the Urban Education Network during its first three years, the actions and perceptions of its participants had to be carefully determined. Extensive information about official Network activities had been compiled and was already on file in the UEP office. But a complete picture of the Network and the extent of its influence could only be put together by questioning the UEP staff, Urban Fellows, and others from urban school districts and state departments of education.

In order to accomplish this documentation, four steps were followed. On March 10, 1980, questionnaires (see Appendix B) were sent to the 31 Urban Fellows. Of that number, 25 responded. Their initial answers helped us in developing an interview format (see Appendix C) which would enable the collection of additional necessary information.

During the RJPG meeting held April 21-23, 1980, Allen Parker and Kenneth Pickens used the format to interview four representatives from (at that time) low-involved systems. From May 19 through June 6, face-to-face, on-site interviews were conducted in the offices of seven of the most actively participating systems. During those visits, 23 individuals, identified as familiar with the Network, were separately interviewed. (The preponderance of those interviewed were directors; this fact was an indicator for one of the eventual conclusions of the report.) In order to fill out the perceptions of some of the remaining districts or agencies, follow-up telephone interviews were held with six Urban Fellows between June 10 and July 6.

In all, 33 state and urban school officials representing 17 participating systems were directly interviewed. Their views, when combined with the results gathered from the 25 completed questionnaires, provided us with a relatively complete documentation of member activities, perceptions, and opinions.

Because of the effectiveness of the questionnaire and interview formats for collecting needed information, it is suggested that similar methods be used in putting together the next picture of the development of the Urban Education Network. With similar data gathering procedures, conducted at, perhaps, one-year intervals, it should be possible to document growth or reversals in any of the critical areas. At the end of such documentation answers should be available to important questions about issues like:

1. RJPG stability, ownership, regularity of attendance

   Has the current nucleus of membership increased? decreased? changed?

   Has the trend toward increased member involvement continued? What now is the role of the UEP staff? The advisory committee? The support team? Have expectations for lobbying activities, funding support, awareness of NIE initiatives, and direction for state departments continued, been met, or faded out?

2. Contact among other Network participants

Have the number and kinds of contacts grown? Have any truly reciprocal relationships developed? What has resulted from initial efforts at collaboration?

3. Contact with regional laboratory

Has the UEP staff been able to increase service to Network members? Do expectations still exist for increased delivery of programs, consultants, and technical assistance?

4. Level of participation within district or agency

What now is the role of the Urban Fellow? What strengths and weaknesses are now apparent in the concentration of director level representation? How does the support team function within its district or agency? What kinds of effects are in evidence in the system? How widespread are they? How many reached the school and classroom level? Have any results become truly institutionalized? Have active representatives from systems that are unresponsive to the Network's activities been helped in increasing their effectiveness as change agents within their systems?

5. Benefits, costs, value of the Network

What benefits can members now point to? Are visible results, programs, and projects more readily demonstrable? Which kinds of assistance are most useful and effectively disseminated? What indications are there that school improvement is occurring? Have members increased their contributions in time, money, or personnel? Would they be willing to do so in the future? What now is the value of this Network over others? Have its strengths been built upon? Have its weaknesses persisted?

6. Goals, expectations

What now are the goals of the Network? From the Fellows point of view? From the UEP's? What are members' current expectations for the future? What prospects seem likely to occur?

With a regular documentation of the answers to questions such as these, the Urban Education Network should be able to assess itself at various important points in its development and continue to plan and refine its future growth.

APPENDIX B: SURVEY QUESTIONNAIRE FOR THE FORMATIVE ANALYSIS
March 10, 1980

URBAN EDUCATION PROGRAM

Documentation and Formative Analysis Study of UEP Network

Questionnaire for Urban Fellows

Name_____ Institution_____

1. When you became an Urban Fellow, what benefits for your school district did you hope to obtain from the Urban Education Program Network?

2. What benefits has your school district actually received from the network? (Be specific, indicating ideas, documents, numbers of people helped, their positions, informal contacts, workshops, etc. Use the back of this sheet if necessary.)

3. What contributions have you or your staff made to the UEP Network?

4. How have you personally benefited from being a participant in the Network?

5. From your perspective, what role has the CEMREL UEP staff played in the Network? Has their role been different than what you expected? How?

6. In what ways have you been disappointed with the Network, either from the school system's viewpoint or from your own personal viewpoint?

7. How could the Regional Joint Planning Group operate more effectively?

8. What contacts have you made at RJPG meetings and other meetings sponsored by the UEP staff that proved to be useful for your school district?

9. What school districts, state education agencies, or individuals in the Network have you contacted outside these meetings? List any collaborative efforts that have resulted from the contact. How often have you contacted each of these participants and for what reasons? By what means did each contact take place (by phone, letter, personal visit, etc.)?

10. What consultants or technical assistance has your school district received from CEMREL or other R&D and service organizations as a result of contacts made through the network?

11. List any other observations you would like to make about your involvement or your school's involvement with the Network. (In other words, describe anything we have overlooked in this questionnaire that we should have asked you.)

APPENDIX C: INTERVIEW QUESTIONS FOR THE FORMATIVE ANALYSIS

URBAN EDUCATION PROGRAM NETWORK

I. History and Relationship to Superintendent and State Department

- How did you get involved with the UEP Network?
- What have been the changes in the involvement of your district or agency?
- What interactions concerning the UEP have you had with your Superintendent or head of your state agency?
- What is your current relationship with your state department? (or urban districts)

II. Goals and Expectations

- What did you want to get from the Network when you joined it?
- What do you expect to get now?
- What would you like to get in the future ideally?

III. Participants

- How are the members of your local support team involved with the Network?
- Are there any additional people in your district or agency who have been involved in activities of the UEP?

IV. Decision-Making and Governance

- How were decisions made in the early days of the UEP Network?
- How are decisions made now?
- How would you prefer that decisions be made?
- How should the role of the Advisory Committee be changed?
- How should the role of the RJPG be changed?
- How should the role of the CEMREL staff in decision making be changed?

V. Programs and Projects

- What kinds of programs and projects has your district or agency done with the UEP that were formally planned by the Network?
- What kinds of things has your district or agency done with the UEP that were not formally planned by the Network?

VI. Benefits to district or agency

- List the specific benefits your district or agency has received from participation in the Network.
- Information?
- Materials?
- Products?
- Where did they come from?

VII. Contributions

- List the contributions your district or agency has made to the UEP Network.
- Information?
- Materials?
- What resources could you share?
- From what level?
- To whom?

VIII. Means and Obstacles to Continuing Involvement

- What obstacles do you face in being involved in the UEP Network?
- How does the Network assist you in overcoming these obstacles?
- What additional things could the Network be doing to overcome the obstacles?

IX. Staffing and Facilitating

- From your perspective, what role has the CEMREL UEP staff played in the Network?
- How has the staff's role been different than what you expected?

- How effective has the UEP staff organizational arrangement (project coordinators) been from your viewpoint?

- How would you change the UEP staff organization?

- Would it be valuable to have shared staff with the member institutions in the UEP Network?

- What communication mechanisms used by the CEMREL staff have been the most effective from your viewpoint? e.g., directories, program update memorandums, etc.?

- What other communication mechanisms would you suggest?

- Should there be more frequent general meetings of the Network or fewer? (as opposed to workshops or specific projects)

- Should the staff continue to distribute materials it selects to the Network as well as materials the Network's participants request?

- Should the member districts and agencies continue to send out unsolicited materials to other Network participants as well as materials requested by those participants?

- In what ways have you been disappointed with the network either from your district or agency's viewpoint or from your own?

X. Finance

- What expenses of your district or agency's involvement in the network does your district or agency now pay?

- What are the future prospects for the district to pay less or more of your expenses?

- What recommendations do you have for increasing the Network's funding?

- What funding mechanisms do you suggest for the continuation of the Network if federal funding ends?

XI. Contact with Other Network Participants

- What other participants have you had contact with outside the RJPG meeting?

- Names?

- Position?

- Districts or agencies?

- What was the nature of the contact?
- What happened as a result?
- What benefit did you receive?
- Please look at this list and tell me (going city by city and state by state) which of these districts, agencies, or people you have had contact with outside the RJPG meetings. What was the nature of each contact?
- Looking back at the whole list, which ones do you plan or want to contact?

Akron (Don McCarthy*, Conrad C. Ott, D. Eugene Dominic)

Chicago (Gerard Heing*, Angeline P. Caruso)

Cincinnati (John Grate*, James Jacobs, Joseph Felix, Lorena O'Donnell, Harold Powell, Ralph Shauk, Ruth Wernersbach, Moss White)

Cleveland (Marian Kilbane-Flash*, Peter Carlin)

Columbus (Walter Richardson*, Joseph Davis, Evelyn Jones, Calvin Smith, Amos White)

Dayton (John Maxwell)

Des Moines (Keith Hyde*, Dwight Davis, Wesley Chapman)

Detroit (Allen Zondlak*, Arthur Jefferson, Marvin Green, Helen Hart, Robert Lankton)

Illinois (Eldon Grossner*, Joseph Cronin, J. Robert Sampson, Rita Dee, Carolyn Farrar, Wendell Meeks, George Pintar)

Indiana (Timothy Giles*, Harold Negley, Rose Marie Banks, Archie Bradford, Art Jordan)

Indianapolis (Lorenza Dixon*, Karl Kalp, William Douglas, William Jones, Terry Ogle)

Iowa (Robert Benton, Thomas Andersen)

Kansas City (James Roleke*, Robert Wheeler, James Boyd, Jack Casner, Emma Jean Clark, Marjory Farrell, Barbara Hankinson, Paul Holmes, Conrad Miner, Edwin Nance)

Kentucky (Taylor Hollin*, Raymond Barber, Clyde Caudill, Donald Hunter, Conley Manning)

Louisville (Reece Little*, E.C. Grayson)

*Official representative

| | |
|---|---|
| Memphis | (Joyce Weddington*, William D. Callian*, W. W. Herenton, William Sweet, Bobby Young) |
| Michigan | (John Dobbs*, Gene Paslov, Philip Runkel, Claudette Nelson, John Osborne) |
| Milwaukee | (David Bennett*, Grant Gordon*, Lee McMurrin, Kent Anderson) |
| Minneapolis | (Marshal Kaner*, Ray Arveson) |
| Minnesota | (Len Nachman*, Howard Casmey) |
| Missouri | (Albert Walker*, Arthur Mallory, Tom Odneal) |
| Nashville | (Edward Binkley*, Elbert Brooks*, Helen Brown, Frank Curran, Theodore Martin, Alonzo Randalls, Jr.) |
| Nebraska | (Evelyn Lavaty*, Anne Campbell, Stan Carlson, Harriet Egertson, Hugh Harlan, Marge Hathaway, Roger Hudson, Sharon Meyer, ) |
| Ohio | (Loyd Stuller*, Franklin Walter) |
| Omaha | (Paul Malcom*, Owen Knutzen, Evelyn Montgomery, Norbert Schuerman) |
| St. Louis | (Ronald Stodghill*, Robert Wentz, Leona Mackler, Barbara Holt) |
| St. Louis County | (Doris Eldridge*, Thomas Smith, Kenneth Pilot) |
| St. Paul | (Joanne McMahon* George Young) |
| Tennessee | (Howard McNeese*, Edward Cox) |
| Toledo | (Gerald Biernacki*, Donald Steele, Sylvia Jones, Sally Clapp, Howard Moskowitz) |
| Wichita | (A. W. Dirks*, Alvin Morris, Lawrence Bechtold, Sam Spaght) |
| Wisconsin | (Tom Stefonek*, Barbara Thompson, Russell Mosely, Catherine Stehly) |

XII. Contact with Other Organizations Resulting from the Network

- What consultants or technical assistance has your district or agency received from CEMREL as a result of contacts made through the Network?
- What consultants or technical assistance has your district or agency received from other R&D or service organizations as a result of contacts made through the Network?
- What other Networks are you involved in?
- What is the value of this one over others?

XIII. Research and Evaluation

- What R&E benefits did you expect?
- What R&E have you gained?
- What R&E would you like to see?

XIV. Network Evaluation Activities

- In the future how can we get meaningful indicators of the impact of the Network on school improvement in specific districts or agencies involved in UEP workshops, seminars, etc.?
- In other districts or agencies in the Network?
- In districts and agencies beyond the Network?

XV. Problems

- What short-term or unanticipated problems have impeded the Network at one time or another during its development?

XVI. Unanticipated Outcomes

- What things about the Network and its outcomes did you not anticipate?
- What continuing problems reduce the effectiveness of the Network?

XVII. Future Prospects

- What do you think are the prospects of the UEP Network 3 years from now?
- What are the prospects 5 or 6 years from now?

XVIII. Why do you spend your time in the Network?

APPENDIX D: CHRONOLOGY OF THE URBAN EDUCATION NETWORK ACTIVITIES

4/77: Harriet Doss Willis, a CEMREL Research Associate, initiates discussions with Wade Robinson, CEMREL President, other CEMREL staff, and officials in the National Institute of Education (NIE) concerning the need for an initiative to improve urban education.

6/77: NIE offers CEMREL a sole-source grant opportunity to convene a conference in July of 1978 on research in urban education instruction.

8/77: NIE awards the grant to CEMREL for the conference on urban education instruction. Willis is formally appointed project Director.

9/77: Willis, Robinson and another CEMREL member, Donald Miller, decide to make the conference the first major activity in an ongoing Urban Education Program (UEP). CEMREL creates the UEP and designates Willis as its Director. She is given one full-time and two part-time staff members for the UEP, including Nellie Harrison, who becomes her assistant.

9/77: Willis sends letters to superintendents of 20 urban school districts in twelve Midwestern states and to the commissioners of the state departments of education in the 12 states inviting them to send representatives to CEMREL for a meeting of a "Regional Joint Planning Group" (RJPG) to help plan the conference and the UEP.

10/77: First RJPG (Network) meeting with UEP staff and national consultants in St. Louis.

11/77-1/78: UEP staff begin speaking of the systems represented in the RJPG as the "Urban Education Network" and decide to make it a continuing entity; however, do not name the Network formally and continue to use "RJPG" as title for its meetings involving representatives from all of the systems.

UEP staff decide to create an "ad hoc task force" or advisory committee smaller than the RJPG to assist with details of planning the conference on urban education instruction and with planning other Network activities between meetings of all Network members.

11/77-4/78: Conduct of UEP Status Study of exemplary programs throughout full Network.

1/78: Internal Joint Planning Group meeting of UEP staff, CEMREL administration, and representatives of each program effort within CEMREL (to plan cooperative arrangements between CEMREL and each Network institution)

2/78: First Network advisory committee meeting in St. Louis. Introduces concept of making each RJPG representative an "Urban Fellow" approved by both CEMREL and his or her system.

UEP conduct of school district needs survey of full Network.

3/78: Meeting of academic consultants to assist with proposal planning.

3/78-8/78: UEP school/community profile development field visits to every urban school district in the Network.

4/78: Full Network meeting in St. Louis. Approves concept of "Urban Fellow."

5/78: UEP staff first discuss networking strategy with a national consultant, Allen Parker.

7/78: First UEP National Conference, "What Do We Know About Teaching and Learning in Urban Schools?" and full Network meeting in St. Louis.

9/78: Network advisory committee meeting in St. Louis.

10/78: R&D Speaks - Strategies for Classroom Management workshop for Network participants led by Jane Stallings in Cincinnati.

UEP meeting with Allen Parker on networking strategy.

11/78: Product Selection & Enhancement of Reading, seminar for Network participants led by Isabel Beck in St. Louis.

12/78: Full Network meeting (at which collaborative r&d groups were formed) in Memphis.

2/79: UEP planning symposium for second national conference with students and nationally known researchers and educators in St. Louis.

3/79: Conference on Testing & Instruction, full Network meeting, and collaborative r&d group meetings in Detroit.

UEP presentation of Student Team Learning orientation session in Cincinnati.

5/79: UEP/Midwest Regional Exchange (MRx) Research Within Reach (RWR) workshop in Lansing.

6/79: UEP/MRx presentation of a review of reading research, an orientation to Student Team Learning activities, and the first in a series of six reading workshops for Youngstown Public Schools.

7/79: Second UEP National Conference, "From Desegregated Schools to Integrated Education," co-sponsored by Milwaukee Public Schools held in Milwaukee.

Danforth Foundation desegregation consultation meeting with UEP, national consultants and Network participants in Milwaukee.

Summer 79: "Awareness of CEMREL" presentation conducted by Network's state department representative in Nebraska for a non-public school district.

9/79: Communication/Facilitation workshop led by UEP staff for Missouri State Department of Education in Kansas City.

10/79: Midwest Regional Forum in Milwaukee "Dissemination and Basic Skills".

UEP presentation for city-wide reading committee in Minneapolis

11/79: UEP review of reading research for district-wide consortium in Cincinnati.

1/80: UEP Career Explorations Project workshops for principals and facilitators in St. Louis Public Schools.

UEP Career Explorations Project orientation workshop for teachers and counselors in St. Louis.

2/80: Network advisory committee meeting in St. Louis reviews the plans of for Donald Miller, Ken Pickens, and Allen Parker to initiate a planned "formative analysis" of the Network.

Second edition of the Status Study of Exemplary Program.

UEP Career Explorations Project inservice workshop for St. Louis Public Schools.

Beginning of a workshop series on CEMREL programs and products for St. Louis Public Schools.

Beginning of UEP Oral and Written Communication Skills Project implementation in St. Louis and Cincinnati Public Schools.

3/80: UEP training session on classroom observation techniques for principals and supervisors in Cincinnati.

UEP workshops on long range planning for St. Louis Public Schools facilitators.

3/80: UEP presentation at Facilitators' Training Workshop on competency based education in St. Louis.

Initial data collection activities for documentation and formative analysis of the UEP Network.

4/80: Full Network meeting in St. Louis at which new research and development utilization (RDU) groups were formed.

State department representatives meet in St. Louis to discuss their role in the Network.

UEP Career Explorations Project inservice workshop for St. Louis Public Schools.

Keynote Address by UEP coordinator at Ohio Department of Education's Urban Education Conference in Columbus.

4/80-8/80: Interaction with all Network participants for the documentation and analysis of the Network study.

5/80: UEP participation in program planning for new alternative school in Cincinnati.

UEP/MRx RWR workshop for district administrators and supervisors in Cincinnati.

UEP/Detroit Public Schools planning meetings on the initiation of project dealing with the problems of high school youth in Detroit.

Harrison formally becomes Coordinator of the Network; Willis remains Director of UEP.

6/80: UEP review of reading research and UEP/MRx RWR reading conference in Nashville.

UEP awareness session on student team learning for St. Louis Public Schools.

UEP time management workshop (on material from a Michigan study) for St. Louis Public Schools.

UEP arts in education planning meeting with new alternative school staff in Cincinnati.

7/80: UEP Oral and Written Communication Skills Project summer institute for Cincinnati and St. Louis Public Schools participants in St. Louis.

UEP Director meets with KEDS staff in Akron.

UEP Network state department representatives meeting in St. Louis.

8/80: UEP/RDU group on school climate improvement meeting in Columbus.

UEP in-depth workshops on Student Team Learning for St. Louis Public Schools.

UEP arts in education workshop for new alternative school in Cincinnati.

Keynote Address by UEP Coordinator on "The Nature of Evaluation" at Ohio State Department of Education, in Columbus.

9/80: UEP/Rx What the literature says about Mastery Learning, Presentation by UEP Coordinator, at Sharonville, Ohio.

Network advisory committee meeting in St. Louis.

CEMREL Training Program for Minorities and Women educational r&d training sessions in St. Louis for participants selected from UEP network.

UEP/Detroit Public Schools planning meetings on project dealing with the problems of high school youth, in Detroit.

10/80: Full Network meeting in St. Louis; major discussion topic is findings of "Formative Analysis" of the Network. RDU groups also meet.

Network meeting is followed by NIE-funded three days of "policy seminars" on urban education, which draw heavily on members of the Network but also include other educators and researchers concerned with urban education from throughout the nation.

APPENDIX E: LIST OF NETWORK MEMBERS

ILLINOIS

Eldon Grossner, Assistant Superintendent
Department of LEA Services
Illinois State Board of Education
Springfield, Illinois

Gerard J. Heing, Assistant Superintendent
for Curriculum
Chicago Public Schools
Chicago, Illinois

INDIANA

Alexander Brown
Consultant
Equal Education Opportunities
Indiana State Department of Public Instruction
Indianapolis, Indiana

Lorenza Dixon
Director of Curriculum Studies
Indianapolis Public Schools
Indianapolis, Indiana

IOWA

Mary Lynne Jones
Consultant
Education Equity Section
Iowa Department of Public Instruction
Des Moines, Iowa

E. Keith Hyde, Director
Department of Planning & Development
Des Moines Public Schools
Des Moines, Iowa

KANSAS

A. W. Dirks, Director
Research, Planning, & Development
Wichita Public Schools
Wichita, Kansas

KENTUCKY

Taylor N. Hollin, Executive Assistant to
the Superintendent
Bureau of Instruction
Kentucky Department of Education
Frankfort, Kentucky

Reece E. Little, Jr., Director
Middle School Education
Jefferson County Public Schools
Louisville, Kentucky

MICHIGAN

John W. Dobbs, Assistant Superintendent
School & Community Affairs
Michigan Department of Education
Lansing, Michigan

Allen F. Zondlak, Director of Planning
Detroit Public Schools
Detroit, Michigan

MINNESOTA

Len R. Nachman, Evaluation Supervisor
Office of Planning & Evaluation
Minnesota Department of Education
St. Paul, Minnesota

Betty Jo Zander, Associate Superintendent
Educational Support Services
Minneapolis Public Schools
Minneapolis, Minnesota

Joanne McMahon, Assistant Principal
Como Park Senior High
St. Paul, Minnesota

MISSOURI

Albert Walker, Assistant Commissioner
Division of Urban and Teacher Education
Department of Elementary and Secondary
Education
Jefferson City, Missouri

James Roleke, Evaluation Coordinator
Research and Evaluation Department
The School District of Kansas City, Missouri
Kansas City, Missouri

MISSOURI

Ronald Stodghill, Deputy Superintendent
of Instruction
St. Louis Public Schools
St. Louis, Missouri

Doris D. Eldridge, Director
Public Personnel Services
Town and Country, Missouri

NEBRASKA

Evelyn Lavaty, Supervisor
Special Vocational Needs
Division of Vocational Education
Nebraska Department of Education
Lincoln, Nebraska

Paul J. Malcom, Staff Assistant
Division of Research
Omaha Public Schools
Omaha, Nebraska

OHIO

Loyd Stuller, Fiscal Specialist
Urban Programs
Ohio Department of Education
Columbus, Ohio

Donald W. McCarthy, Director
Research, Evaluation, and Development
Akron Public Schools
Akron, Ohio

John H. Grate, Director
Planning & Development Branch
Department of Curriculum & Instruction
Cincinnati, Ohio

Marian Kilbane-Flash, Supervisor
Division of Research & Development
Cleveland, Ohio

Evelyn Luckey, Assistant Superintendent
Instructional Services
Middle School Development
Columbus, Ohio

OHIO

Gerald J. Biernacki, Executive Director
Research, Development, & Evaluation
Toledo Public Schools
Toledo, Ohio

TENNESSEE

Howard McNeese
Deputy Commissioner
State Department of Education
Nashville, Tennessee

William D. Callian, Jr., Director
Division of Title I Programs
Memphis, Tennessee

Joyce B. Weddington, Assistant Director
Division of Research Services
Memphis City Schools
Memphis, Tennessee

Edward Binkley, Director
Research & Evaluation
Metropolitan Nashville Public Schools
Nashville, Tennessee

WISCONSIN

Tom Stefonek, Director
Planning & Evaluation Research
Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction
Madison, Wisconsin

David A. Bennett, Deputy Superintendent
Milwaukee Public Schools
Milwaukee, Wisconsin

Grant Gordon, General Assistant
to the Superintendent
Milwaukee, Wisconsin